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WIRE

ISSUE 193 MARCH 2000 £3.10

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rhythms of the
spheres

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H Kirk**

electronic
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The Third Eye Foundation

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letters

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a full name and address. Every letter published wins a FREE CD

Motörhead madness

Thank you for Lemmy's Invisible Jukebox (*The Wire* 192). It was the funniest for a long time. The magazine is a great read as well as a pointer to potential listening experiences, but you really need more stuff that makes readers want to laugh out loud – more humour, less po-facedness.

Gary Saunders Selon

Concerning Lemmy: the song "Riding With The Driver" relates to steam trains, not motorbikes. This was also the original title of the Motorhead album *Orgasmatron*, which is why the cover shows a speeding train rather than Woody Allen in a cupboard.

I must remember not to invite Lemmy round to my house to listen to records. His appearance on Radio 1's Friday Rock Show as a guest DJ several years ago had some interesting moments.

Martin Young Cormorant



Pick of the month: Lemmy

some people like you that have some brains. I've been following Galas's discography in total exasperation since *Litanies* and I have read and translated tons of articles and interviews with her from Greek to English.

Whoever reads even a single Galas interview will automatically understand that her personality is parallel to her artistic contribution to today's disputed term 'music'. A real artist. And to me she is more Greek than lots of Greeks around here, because she has the strength of an ancient Greek goddess, being a constant light and living for today without forgetting the past. This is her 'sophistry'. This is her 'witchcraft'.

Finally, I find it hard not to praise your photographer Tim Kent for his GREAT job. As an amateur photographer I always dreamt of photographing DG and, believe me, Tim Kent's photos are the ones I always wanted to take. They allow you to have a full view of the Diva's grace.

Konstantinos Dugas Athens, Greece

I like Diamanda's music. It's good. She can do many noteworthy things with her voice. However, I am not convinced by Ian Penman's effort to portray her as some sort of scholar. I first began to worry when she claimed that the Turkish government, in the course of virginity inspections, effectively rapes Turkish girls in the name of religion. Since Ataturk's establishment of the secular Turkish Republic in 1927, human rights abuses in Turkey have been motivated by the government's campaign to suppress religion, not to impose it. How could someone who, as she describes it, studied the "interface of biochemistry-neurochemistry-biology" at Scripps Research Center in La Jolla commit such an error? Surely she had to take some political science courses for breadth in addition to her area of specialty. The answer is that there is no such specialty. Scripps is an oceanographic institute, where they may occasionally dabble in cephalopod neurochemistry, but where their primary interests concern such things as currents and submarine vulcanism. As an academic, I know all too well that scholarly credentials don't mean much even when they're authentic. There's certainly no reason to make them up, especially when writing about an artist whose soulful music is in so little need of buttressing through institutional affiliation.

Justin Smith Department of Philosophy, Columbia University, New York, USA

Loved the photo of Diamanda Galas. Looking forward to an English version of the article to go with them.

Peter Quaife Birmingham

A pair of Hams

In his review (*The Wire* 192) of Peter Hammill's recently revised second version of *The Fall Of The House Of Usher*, Andy Hamilton says: "In a way, it's surprising it's taken him [Hammill] so long to find a funded spirit in Rodenack Usher". Yet, as every Hammill aficionado knows, Hammill began work on this opera as long ago as 1973 (the libretto by Chris Judge Dunn already written), releasing the first version in 1991 on the Some Beazie label. Moreover, Hammill neglects to mention the importance of this work in Hammill's sizeable oeuvre described by the composer in *Rutherford 29* as "proto in my development simultaneously a test-bed and an open canvas on which I could experiment in private – even while I was continuing to do so in public". So, *The Fall Of The House Of Usher* has been something of an obsession for Hammill over three decades. Prospective listeners should bear this in mind when approaching this demanding and atmospheric work.

Chris Blackford vo@e-mail

Stay as you are

I thought I would drop you a line in response to the letter from Magalhaes (*The Wire* 192). Whilst I appreciate Magalhaes's mention/attempt to help you

improve the magazine, I feel that you have a fine balance as things are, featuring both artists from jazz/World Music/experimental and "Melody Moler nice-haircut/pseudo-cool bands". If it wasn't for your features on such pseudo-cool acts as Alec Empire (long before NME picked up on him or ATR I might add), Panacea, Nic Endo, Soeodiranji, Jansky Nose, Pan Sonic, et al, I probably wouldn't have taken out a subscription with you. The reason I did is precisely because you DO feature artists that aren't covered in other publications whilst also informing me of artists that I wouldn't necessarily have known of. I agree with him/her in that your coverage of artists is open-minded and boundless. However, would he/she prefer if you didn't feature artists such as DJ Scud because they may have been in NME/Melody Moler, and not on the strength of the music that they create? Doesn't it say on the cover "Adventures in MODERN Music"? As far as I'm concerned, if it isn't broke, don't fix it.

Martin Roberts vo@e-mail

Diamanda is forever

Being Greek plus a fanatic of Diamanda Galas I was more than agitated to see her image printed on *The Wire*'s front cover (190/191). I always considered her sort of an outcast, an artist on whom most of the magi had raised a secret embargo. Thanks, Lord, there are

YO LA TENGO

And then nothing
turned itself inside
-out

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Sliding scales

In response to Rob Young's feature *Worship The Glitch Undercurrents* (The Wire 190/191) I feel compelled to set the record straight for *Wire* readers.

A key aspect of the Buchla Modular Synth used by Morton Subotnick in the late 1960s was that it had no conventional keyboard. Instead pressure sensitive touch plates could be assigned to trigger specific pitches and/or control loudness, brightness, modulation or sliding between pitches. It was this unusual and expressive interface which allowed Subotnick to create such uniquely alien articulations and gestures.

Also I think it can be misleading to associate the creation of certain synth designs too closely with the artistic intentions of prospective users. Synths are by nature open-ended tools. Most can sound as polite or as vicious as the player/programmer intends. The Clavia Nord Lead when it arrived in 1995 was technically at a new peak of high res for a totally microchip based machine. Its processor chip outputs numbers so fast that audible steps between digital values were inaudible, giving it a smooth analogue feel which appealed to the retro market for vintage Moog type synths. However Autecube and zovet france have found that the Nord also excels at generating granular rasping sounds and ultra-sharp spiky clicks, thuds, cracks, cracks etc when deployed at very low frequencies which it produces with less loss in volume and clarity than most previous designs.

OK, I admit I'm an avid synthesist, but for me the most fascinating aspects of the music mentioned rise out of the way the artists have been inspired by their synths to create their own language of sounds and gestures. Too much electronica gets obscured by an overtly conceptual and poetic assessment. Let's have a bit more descriptive evocation.

Tom Cullin Northbridge

Choppers over Belfast

As an addendum to Ken H. Lee's excellent feature on helicopters (The Wire 190/191) the same machinery has been used for surveillance and transportation purposes by the army in Northern Ireland for the past 30 years. Their familiar whirr-whump sound in the skies overhead (a metal machine music?) became like the wailing police fire engine/ambulance siren (politically reffered to as 'the national anthem') one manifestation of Russia's Internation.

While lazy documentary makers reinforced the national stereotype by latching on to the atrocity whine of Uilleann pipes, the reality was that machines provided the rhythms and melodies to Belfast's aural soundtrack during the period referred to as 'the Troubles'. The helicopters are less apparent now that we have a fragile peace, but they've been replaced by the sounds of other machinery, cranes and lorries involved in the reconstruction and regeneration of the city. Not an Uilleann pipe within earshot.

It's little surprise, then, that the sound of the helicopter

has been incorporated into the recordings of [REDACTED] musicians. Local group The Dingo Babies combined the helicopter sound and the dialogue sample, 'Some day she was gonna end' from *Apocalypse Now* into their pop single 'Small Town' (11988). Deallocating the futility of conventional warfare in South East Asia to Europe and welding it to a glorious chorus that commented on religious intolerance and political small-mindedness in Ulster's small towns, it's one of Northern Ireland's less pop classics. Secondly, local sound architects. Technology gave us *Whirlbirds* (1992), an entire album of helicopters parading the skies over Belfast, the original sound treated with a battery of effects like (I'm making an assumption here) ring modulation. It sweeps some musicality back into the original helicopter sounds and sits fairly closely to the ideas pursued in Stockhausen's almost contemporaneous (but better known) *Heliogrenz Streichquartett* (though *Technology* leans music from the rotors rather than use conventional instruments).

The helicopter, then, an extremely important tool in the sonic armoury of Belfast's music makers over the past decade.

Tom Gilmore Belfast

Road Lesh travelled

I thoroughly enjoyed Edwin Pountney's review of *The Grateful Dead's So Many Roads* box set. His assessment that the latter-day material is somewhat incongruous is right on the money, although I feel that this is partly due to the way the set was compiled, as they played many excellent shows through the 90s. One small quibble: 'Box Of Rain' is a Lesh-Hunter composition not a Garcia-Hunter tune.

Luis Torregrosa Trenton NJ USA

Mulch ado

Brian Wilson does a great disservice to the DJ Speechbrain's 'Janisy Noise' CD both figuratively and literally if his review is to be believed (Soundcheck, The Wire 190/191). The floppy disk glued to the CD's sleeve may well contain Audiomulch software, but the program can also be found on the CD. Audiomulch is a great program and deserves mention in your Multimedia section (it already has been, back in The Wire 785 – Ed.) I think the packaging is a wee joke on the consumer – one removes the well stuck on floppy only to find the software on the CD. Oh dear. Stick the floppy in a PC, use Explorer to view your CD-ROM drive, et voila.

Graeme Park via email

Old fossils: you dig?

So Peter Shapiro how is it speaking to Mr Caetano EGO Veloso invisible Jukebox? The Wire 190/191? Sure he is a good composer, and he made a great contribution to music history, but how he just occupies too much space. Brazilian music made him a kind of icon, an Apollo or Zeus perhaps, but the worst of all is that he actually believed that? If he ever did something

anti-establishment I don't remember – that must have been far in the past. He and most of his mates are the establishment themselves, they are like gangsters, they don't let anything new appear, they are so patronizing. Fortunately for us, since the 70s there have been many creative and lively musical acts. Fellin, Patife Band, De Falla and the well known Chico Science. Why not cover people who are experimenting now instead of egocentric old fossils?

Carlo Sansolo London

Faulty thinking

While your extensive coverage of free-minded music is highly commendable, there remains much that I find at fault with your magazine. For one, you indulge in indecorous self-promotion ("the best Goddess music on the planet") and make an inordinate display of insolent incoherence. This is most tangible in your aggressive endorsement of the fashionable non-mainstream (Tonic, Scanner, Ami Lindsay, etc) an incisive ome-celebration of commonplaceness acclaimed as newfangled and effulgent. On the other hand, you systematically consign – if not castigate the true heralds of innovation and hardware less, favoured and esteemed because more experimental less popular – to abject obscurity. In a faint-hearted and ill-defined attempt at reclaiming your avowed *Wektorshowing*, and clearly compensating for your medicore inclinations, you offer an annual, redemptive about-face, a list of albums (many of which are barely and ineffectively brought to the readers' attention) under that vaguest of headings: outer limits. It can hardly strike one as unaccountable when the record ultimately voted in as the most persuasive of the year happens to be a popular/popular one (Tinky Sonic Youth *Portishead*).

Francisca Monsalve Bangkok, Thailand

Corrections

Issue 192: In The Primer, the photo of Gopal Krishnan on page 37 apparently showed the South Indian vocalist of that name, not Gopal Krishnan the North Indian vichitra vina player. Meanwhile, on the same page, the photo captioned Ustad Mohiuddin Dagri was actually his brother Ustad Aminuddin Dagri. Apologies for the confusion. On the Letters page, we accidentally attributed the item headed 'Cover charges' to the wrong correspondent. It was actually sent in by Joseph Tham of Singapore. In the Jazz in Brief column in Soundcheck, The B Bold Souls CD on Thrill Jockey was given the wrong title. The record's real name is *Lost Nation*. Ochre Records were omitted from the Label Directory. Their details are: Ochre, PO Box 155, Cheltenham, Glos GL51 5LS. OYS Archive/Editor: *guitarfolk* D Cargo. The WMO (Wire Mail Order) address was listed incorrectly. The correct details are: Wire Mail Order, PO Box 112, Stockport, Cheshire SK3 9FD. Email: wiremailorder@cybercom.co.uk. Issue 190/191: In Bites and the Directory, the Website of Werner Daeflecker's Duran label was printed wrongly. The correct URL is www.duran.or.

Sound bank A

Contains the primary audio samples. Different concentric rings contain different samples: drums - green, bass - blue, vocals - yellow, synth - red, riffs - grey.

Stop/Play button

Activates the playhead.

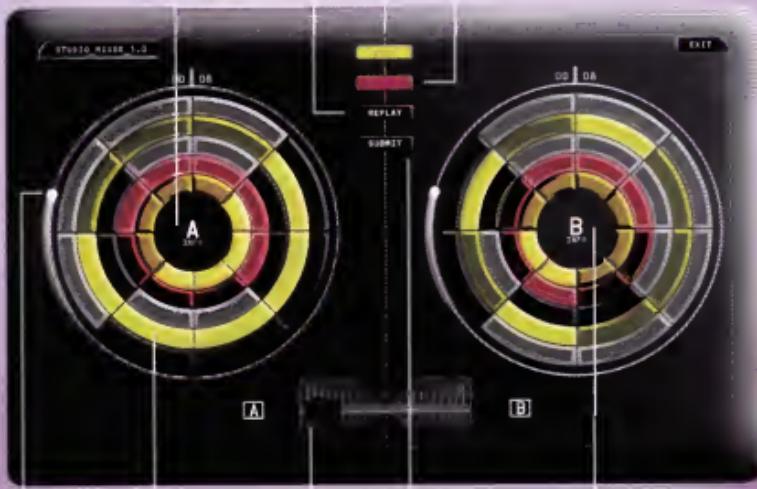
This mixer contains all the elements of a track by DJ Laurence Nelson. By activating the different audio samples, you can remix your own version.

Replay

Press this to replay your mix. When you're satisfied, submit it.

Record button

Press this to start recording your mix. The mixer records all your sample and fader moves.

**Playhead**

Circles the soundbanks like a radar screen trace. Plays the activated samples as it passes over them, moving in a clockwise direction.

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Smooth volume fader to mix the two sound banks' output together. Works just like a crossfade on a set of decks.

Sound bank B

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Audio sample

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Submit

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global ear

Easter Island

To get to Easter Island you must first fly to the Chilean capital of Santiago, and from there board

another local flight to complete the journey. In between Santiago and Easter Island there is nothing but the Pacific Ocean to gaze down on for five hours until, almost unexpectedly, a cliff face is sighted and the plane touches down on the short airstrip that services the small and mysterious Polynesian island. Congratulations! You have now landed on the 'Nav of the World'.

More than 1500 years ago the inhabitants of Easter Island (or Rapa Nui as it was originally called) were split into two groups which historians call the Long Ears and the Short Ears. The Long Ears dominated the Short Ears, whom they forced to labour in the Rano Raraku stone quarry, hewing the giant stone figures (known as moai) from the side of a mountain and transporting them to their destined location on the shore. To move these enormous statues, they made wooden rollers by cutting down trees, but as they neglected to repant any, the island quickly became deforested. Eventually, as the order from the Long Ears to carve even larger stone figures intensified, the Short Ears rebelled against their oppressors and drove them into a flaming pit where the majority of them perished. They also toppled most of the statues (which represented the ancestors of the hated Long Ears) and devoured the cooked flesh of their enemies.

Today the inhabitants of the island are less aggressive, but they're fiercely proud of their history which stands in abundance all around them. The immediate feeling one gets as an outsider is of a place that has remained untouched since the dawn of time, where the horse is still a popular mode of transport, and there is not a mobile phone or a McDonald's in sight. But there is a Catholic church (amazingly, it has managed to incorporate elements of the original islanders' birdman

A survey of sounds from around the planet. This month . . .

cut into its decor), Coca Cola is a popular tipple and, surprisingly, there are two discos in town. That aside, the feeling that you are walking (almost floating) on another planet — especially when you reach the summit of a long dead volcano and look down, or up as the night sky explodes above your head — is hard to shake loose. The experience is (to quote Blue Oyster Cult) akin to being "ODed on life itself".

The real trip, however, happened on New Year's Eve, when the population descended on a part of the island called Tahai to celebrate the imminent millennium, broadcast to the outside world by Chilean TV. Huddled on a volcanic rock-strewn hilltop and looking down at a stage that featured four spotlighted moai on their 'ahu' platform, the scene resembled a cross between Woodstock and the finale of *Close Encounters Of The Third Kind*. The various performers who occasionally



shuffled into view with acoustic guitars hanging from their necks strained to be heard over the rather inadequate sound system, but suddenly everything snapped into place and a magical happening began. The main musical event was a performance by Matato'a, a group of traditional Rapa Nui musicians, singers and dancers. Parading in front of us wearing grass skirts and feathered headdresses, they proceeded to play selections from their latest CD, *Tororo*. The sound of Matato'a is a hawturing mature ceremony and pop, where instruments like drums, ukulele, acoustic and electric guitars cohere around a beat that subliminally creeps into the memory and starts to grow at it.

By the time Y2K crept round, the place was exploding with a massive firework display that,

regardless of safety, had been set off in the middle of the crowd. There were shades of *Apocalypse Now* as showers of brightly coloured flame rained down on the assembled throng, most of whom were too delirious on Chilean champagne to worry about getting burned. The increasingly infectious music of Matato'a continued to roll, while on the hillside a couple of musicians pumped away on accordions and softly sang as the celebration reached its peak. The contrast between the action 'on stage' and the folk singer's simple song was significant, yet it all blended together beautifully. As the last skyrocket burst into a gigantic supernova of green light it was time to visit the local disco.

Discotheque-Toroko was recommended as the place to go if we wanted to see how the locals really let their hair down. It was a gashly painted concrete hut with a corrugated iron roof which, when the music was turned all the way up, sounded from a distance like some gigantic beatbox. Inside, the scene was equally surreal, with wide-eyed tourists, T-shirted slimmers (Bob Marley, Sepultura and Marilyn Manson designs being the most popular) and the occasional strappy-painted dancer from the New Year's celebration, still in full ceremonial costume, all dancing or twirling along to a non-stop Techno music loop under UV lights. The beer was (for once) ice cold and the music was a raw hot flow of high energy, if largely indistinguishable dance tracks. Occasionally this constant beep, boost and beat would be replaced by a more subdued track from Matato'a's latest disc, and once again their more traditionally styled music managed to catch hold, digging deep into the subconscious. Their extremely catchy song "Ite Ah! Ah!", with its Dylansian harmonica opening, fell into the hands of some new aspiring British DJ bound with sampling the same old Chicago and Herbie Hancock breaks, methinks that he (and the group) could have a serious underground club hit on their hands. Matato'a rock!

Inside Discotheque-Toroko was strange, but outside seemed much stranger as the sun came up over the age-old, sightless moai on the dawn of a new millennium. A cocksure's chorus and the crash of breaking waves added to the muffled dance beat now dissolving into a hallucinatory Ambient throng.

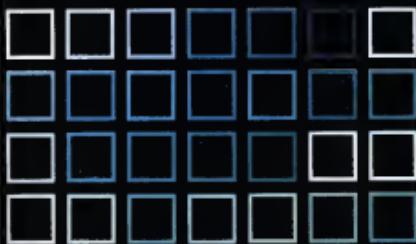
EDWIN FOUNCY

PHOTO: GUY NIBBIE

Easter Island's moai statues line up for the millennium. Above: the best little disco in Rapa Nui



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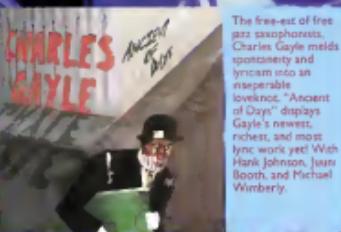
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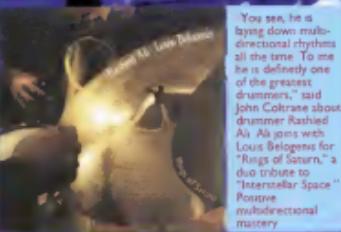
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Dirty jazz. Lounge Lizard Steven Bernstein directs Mobbers, Brigitte Krauss, and Kenny Wollesen through madcap musical strolls through rock, electronica, and jazz. Features riotously covers of Nirvana's "About a Girl," James Brown's "Please Please Please," and many more surprises



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You see, he is a drummer of multi-directional rhythms all the time. To me he is definitely one of the greatest drummers," said John Coltrane about drummer Rashied Ali. Akbar Khan with Louis Belogenis for "Rings of Saturn," a duet tribute to "Interstellar Space" Positive multi-directional mastery



bites



Vladislav Delay

Against the grain

"I'm quite a moody person and I like blue music," says Vladislav Delay, the enigmatic 23 year old musician from Helsinki, and the latest prodigy from the Finnish capital to emerge after the trailblazing efforts of Sanka's minimalist enclave. Yet Delay's grainy, mottled, rusted ambiances, which have so far emerged on the global electronic network's most dynamic underground labels, such as Sigma, Phalo and Mute Plateaux, forsake the oscilloscope rigour of Sanka's most extreme frequencies to produce some of the most melancholy-soaked, elegiac tracks in electronic's continually reconfiguring canon. Meanwhile, last year's 12" beat bulletins on Chan Reaction and Thomas Brinkmann's Max Ernst label scagged the nerve endings with their lengthy development and buried beats that crept out of a haze like trees along a fog-shrouded road. On his two new full length CDs he can be found reaching towards a thoroughly engrossing bombardment of the aural sense. His scattered micro-sounds swirl and eddy, bumping the ground like a discarded plastic bag, but they never disperse into the directionless drift of Ambient.

Sure enough, Delay claims a stronger affinity with jazz and improvised manœuvres than with the vaporous cyber-pronouncements of Techno operatives. "I'm very much interested in the things that have happened within the electronic music scene in the past ten years," he says, adding pragmatically "but of course it's not electronic music that has shaped the world." Trained as a jazz drummer from the age of 14 — "Philly Joe Jones is still the man!" he exclaims — he plunged into an extensive study of percussion from a wide range of the world's musics, and he still claims his biggest influences are "reggae, dub and most of all Afro-American music: Cuban, African, Brazilian." Following stints in several groups, unsuccessfully attempting to fuse sampled beats with live instruments, a trip to New York and Jamaica convinced him to revise his methods radically.

"I spent a long time questioning things," he remembers, "affirming states, selling my huge collection of percussion instruments, and buying some basic studio equipment and hoping for the best, to be able to concretise the musical ideas that had developed along the years. Somewhere around my earliest works I bought a turntable and started wasting my money on electronic music vinyls, trying to find the music I was looking for without getting it. Then I heard the sounds from Berlin and Cologne, and I was relieved to find that music after so many records I didn't like. To this day I really haven't found the music I really would like to listen to, instead of jazz or dub. I am into looping and minimising elements and repetitions, but still it really has to have a musical meaning in it."

Although his music has been embraced by the minority factions championing the 'dicks and cuts' school of digital data abuse, Delay is at pains to distance himself from this most self-referential of

Vladislav Delay

approaches. He doesn't even own a sampler, and his methods depend far more on fortuitous accidents and copious lashings of the echo effect, which shares his name. "It'll probably take a long time before I get myself a Mac computer," he says. "I've been working with the basic things you do with a PC, sequencing... My studio is very basic and more or less broken, coming to an end, and I don't know what I'm going to do about it."

Here's hoping he leaves it to rot. The six tracks on *Entan*, a CD compiled by Mille Plateaux comprising two pieces from a previous release on the Dutch Sigma Editions, plus four other cuts, seem to creep like a lichen mold across the stereo space. Sound splurges colonise the tracks like patches of oxidation, speared by the occasional concerto of dub echo. Delay arms for spontaneously and organic arrangement rather than the arithmetic patterns of quantization. "If there's no improvisation or life in music it's very hard to get me interested in it," he states. "I also use randomness to a point where I'm still in control of it. The music I love is all about the moments of feelings meeting the skills and environment and the function these elements create. It's not very electronic."

Delay is a part of a loose Helsinki collective known as Bassdrum, encompassing "music issues and stuff outside the music scene—design, art, fashion." There's due to be a swift turnover of Delay product in the coming months, with a whole collection of anonymous recordings and productions on the staring block, which he doesn't want named, and various European live appearances lined up for the spring. "How I feel about my music is like a fashion magazine, you put everything to create what is needed but when it's out, the next minute it's gone."

"I more or less mirror my life through my music, so it's very personal and it goes where I go," he concludes. "Sometimes what I put into music goes beyond the blue." **ROB YOUNG** *Entan* is out now on Mille Plateaux. *Uthua* is out now on Chan Reaction. *Conoco's Kemiko* EP is on Sigma. *Wadslav* Delay performs several UK dates this month. See Out There



works best when you're in a state of distraction, listening to it drifting through from other rooms.

"I've heard that about a few of the records I've made," sighs O'Neil. "I can understand it. It's a good record to have breakfast with. I think, though, if I listened to on headphones, erasing all other sonic distractions, you might find that it's a totally different record. It's an atmospheric record, I suppose, but it does have its own almost narrative thing. It can take you through its own rooms as well as finding its place in yours."

O'Neil led a pretty nomadic existence prior to moving to Louisville. She gained her musical education primarily through her brothers, a bunch of unrepentant Bread fans. "They taught me things maybe a ten year old wouldn't otherwise know. One of them taught me how to hear different parts in songs by playing Bread records for me. I played violin and piano for a couple of years and I had a radio but that was really as far as music in the home goes. Then I ended up in Louisville."

Louisville's long rockers Squirrel Bat had recently folded and the remaining members had given up on their speedy post-Huker Du brand of hardcore in favour of a darker, more dilated music. The newly rechristened Sint singlehandedly created the Louisville sound: chipped and cracking guitars and ominous basslines all held together

by Brian McMahon's creepy, whispered vocals. O'Neil was busy writing songs in her bedroom when she was plucked out of potential obscurity by some friends and given the job as Rodan's bassist. "I have to admit that I was a little bit out of the loop and didn't really hear Sint until well after [1991's] *Speakerbox* came out," she explains. "I had already become friends with Brian McMahon and was already playing in Rodan. Of course I loved that stuff and still do when I hear it." However the whole post-rock aftermath still puzzles her. "I feel pretty confused about it. I'm not sure what it is. It seems a kind of broad label and anyone around that time playing any kind of music could be credited with giving birth to it."

Rodan rode the post-Sint wave with real fervour but shortly after the release of their debut album, *9's Rudy*, they called it a day. "We broke up," O'Neil states. "We had other things to do." Since then she's been quietly working on a number of projects, including the short-lived Sonora Pine, who made a couple of records on the Quarterstick label, and Retin, an acoustic guitar/vocal duet since 95, with three records to their name.

Peregrine is O'Neil's first experience of going it totally alone. "It was different on this record because I didn't really have structural collaborators. It was just me—I wrote the structures, left a lot undone, had questions and had to figure it out when it came time to record. Having my own machines to record stuff helped the process of finding my way around parts that were ambiguous and I asked some people to come in and interpret stuff and apply their own character. I did a lot of walking around."

Horrid in snatches as they breathe in and out of the mix, O'Neil's lyrics on *Peregrine* are unselfconsciously surreal, full of dream logic. "I do get lyrics and songs in my dreams," she avers. "It passes me off because they are always the best thing ever. In the dream and then I wake and can't even remember what it was. I guess that the gift of the dream is that you can only have it when you're there. I read a lot of prose but I don't think that influences my writing as much as the poets I've read. There's something different about fitting poetry rhythms into existing song rhythms, which is a totally different beast. I think Jon Mitchell is the best at that. Michael Hunley is good. Leonard Cohen, Nick Drake, Robbie Lee Jones. Any folk or country storytelling kind of writing."

If O'Neil's rollcall of favourite songwriters seems fairly retro, she's quick to defend her tastes, even as she admits that she's sick to death with the idea of keeping up with contemporary sounds. "To me that's really the polar opposite of thinking of things in a new way, right? I'm more interested in scavenging around new and old things I come across and learning ways to make shapes out of music. In Retin it's all about songwriting and that's good, but I also want to write songs and fuck with them—make them as sonically pleasing as much as they are just good songs."

O'Neil is now based in New York, yet her spacious, airy music hasn't been affected by the traffic noise and urban squalor that people commonly think of as informing the New York sound. "Well, I do have a tendency to 'humble' her," she laughs. "Remember, I'm from Louisville."

DAVID KERMAN *Peregrine* is out now on Quarterstick

Tara Jane O'Neil

Louisville dreaming

The idiosyncratic splendour of ex-Rodan bassist/vocalist Tara Jane O'Neil's debut solo album, *Peregrine*, has proved a revelation to anyone who thought alt rock had hit a creative dead end. Back in the mid-90s Rodan unknowingly spearheaded the first post-Sint Louisville breakout, giving birth to countless tribute groups in the name of post-rock. Then along came Peregrine, a set of hazy songforms which drew more from the sun-soaked 70s recordings of the likes of Joni Mitchell and Van Morrison than, say, June 04 44. It is an uneasy listen, not because it's abrasive or sonically harsh but rather for the way it refuses to sit still, changing shape according to the circumstances and surroundings in which you hear it. It

Haco

Hope for happiness

I like pop culture and pop art," declares the maverick Japanese artist Haco. "The very huge meaning of pop. I don't know why, but the pop song is deepest for me. I often wonder why people like certain beats and why around the world people feel the same. This is too deep a subject really, but I read a very curious medical book which said that for the baby in the mother's womb, learning to the sound of blood was similar to the pop music beat. In the beginning the foetus is like a snake, then second step guana type, or kind of frog."

Haco's English is just about good enough to make things a little complicated. She punctuates our conversation with a regular "Hmm, hmm", as she fields my questions. To my ears it's much the same sound that she makes when appraising of the items that comprise our breakfast: each slice of bread and blob of jam greezed like a long lost friend. Through the churning slaps and efts of a foreign tongue, her apopoeia for the positive comes across clearly.

"It means that originally people came from the sea," she adds, continuing her theory. "Ten million years ago — it took a long, long, long time. But in the mother's body all that time is very — pthwst! And that compressed time

in human consciousness is somehow transcended by the rhythmic beat of pop music?" Maybe some memory — the very deepest — is stimulated.

It's an interesting theory, wildly containing as much manga science fiction as pop sociology, and indicative of Haco's wide-eyed curiosity, her organic approach to composition, her surreal sense of humour. Demytivsulver and whimsically digressive, she slips like an eel between thoughts, indulging what Westerners would figure a typically Japanese passion for pick 'n' mix. One moment she runs not through the dog days of heady urban aspiration, the next she flouts through open windows of introspective calm.

Haco's idiosyncratic take on pop evolved in the early '80s, with the emergence of the Japanese new wave. A teenager in the cosmopolitan city of Kobe, she formed After Dinner, a brilliant, wildly eccentric avant rock group that examined and redefined almost every aspect of the genre, picking up a cult following in Europe but not really influencing younger players at home. "Maybe we were too niche — radical. But now the younger people have found out about After Dinner and it's a classic of the Japanese indie scene. The audience were a little bit too serious, too shy."

A bold performer, Haco can charm an audience with an effortless strum on a detuned mandolin, by singing a suddenly swooping note, or striking a closely masked trap. She's been compared to Kate Bush, presumably



Haco

bitstream

Noise signal. According to a recent message from the Australian Extreme label, *Merzbow*, the label's 50 CD set of Japanese noise by Masami Akita aka **Merzbow** is finally nearing completion — over six years since it was first announced. Apparently the set was slated for release last year, but was further delayed by problems with the production of the accompanying *Merzbook*. Now Extreme are promising delivery some time this year. For more info info@extremewire.com, or check the Website at www.merzbow.com/merzbow/aus.html +++

Spunk rock. The *Coll* of John Balance and Peter Christopherson are due to make an ultra-rare live appearance as part of Julian Cope's Cornucopia weekend at the Royal Festival Hall on April 21. As *Time Machines*, they'll be premiering a piece entitled "The Industrial Use Of Semen Will Revolutionise The Human Race" bring amazement. +++ Plunderphone **John Oswald** had a busy year, he's just finished a one-note electroacoustic piece which will premiere this month in Montreal. He's just completed a score for orchestra, robot piano and the voice of Glenn Gould for the National Ballet of Canada. He's currently working on the soundtrack for an eight-screen movie, his photocollages will be displayed at London's Hayward Gallery in May, and a plunderphone box set is in preparation. To keep up with his notorious activities, check out www.60.com +++ In the continuing race to document the early days of electronic music, *Ellipsis* have just stuck a potentially mortal blow. Their 10CD box set **QWNT — The Guru Of Electronic Music** will which will be released sometime this spring, features work from just about everyone from Maryanne Amacher to La Monte Young and Pierre Schaeffer to Jon Hassell. Info at www.ellipsis.com +++ Emphasising the art of sound design over perfunctory soundtrack banalities, the **School Of Sound** is a London-based symposium aiming for a synthesis of sound and vision, both in practice and in theory. Featuring speakers like Mike Figgis, Manfred Eicher, Michael Chen, David Toop, Tom Paulin, Peter Wollen, Sarah Kostoff and Walter Murch, the third School Of Sound focuses on that most neglected element of the soundtrack — the voice. For information on the four-day event (12-15 April, tel 020 7323 3437) +++ Band in a box. The **Groovebox** is a compact synthesizer containing a library of sounds from vintage and not-so-vintage electronic instruments that has been sent to a variety of musicians in order to explore the ways in which they work. The results of this experiment — from musicians like Jean-Jacques Perrey, Dick Hyman, Beck, Some Youth and John McEntire — have been collected on the Grand Royal CD *At Home With The Groovebox* +++ New York beatnik jazz freak, photographer, poet, film maker and all-round downtown Renaissance man **Ira Cohen** has just immortalised himself on celluloid. *Kings With Stow Motes*, a self-directed film about his trek to one of India's most sacred ceremonies, has recently been released on video by *Myopic*. www.myopic.com +++ Hit the north. **Auxiliary** The Wire's weekly Thursday night club at Blau in Oslo, Norway, continues its *Latitude/Longitude* Techno fusions into March, with appearances from Monolake (2 March), Alag and Jazzkammer (9) Photo and Bugge Wesseltoft (16), Noa (23) and Seon vs. Tormen (30). Info from www.blauoslo.com **THE TRAWLER**



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CD LR 279 DOMINIC DUVAL WITH THE C.T.

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The previous CDs by Dominic Duval with the C.T. String Quartet got the highest critical acclaim. With this new recording, Dominic Duval (bass), Tomas Ulrich (cello), Jason Hwang (violin) and Ron Lawrence (viola) take their instant composing to new heights. These four virtuosos sacrifice their ego for the sake of finding a totally unique sound in the history of chamber ensembles.

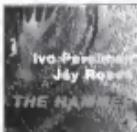


CD LR 283/284 EVAN PARKER/ BARRY GUY

PAUL LYTTON & MARILYN CRISPELL

A double CD (LR 283/284) (60 min. 20)

This is a double CD recorded immediately after the jazz festival in Aix-en-Provence in July 1989 where the musicians performed both as a quartet and in separate combinations. The first disc was recorded in the studio, the second, live at Vortex. Parker/Guy/Lyton has been called 'arguably the greatest active improvising ensemble' (Down Beat) and Marilyn Crispell adds another distinctive voice to the mix. Extensive notes by Steve Kukar match the energy of the music.

CD LR 295 IVO PERELMAN/JAY ROSEN
THE HAMMER

As Walter Horn writes in his liner notes, with this recording, tenor saxophonist Ivo Perelman, this time in company with drummer Jay Rosen, continues his deep exploration of the nether regions of improvised music. 'In part because of their willingness to unlearn and relearn the means whereby the beautiful in music may be created, Perelman and Rosen have given us a century-lasting gift of extraordinary meaning.'

CD LR 297 JOELLE LEANDRE PROJECT with
Marilyn Crispell, Paul Lovens

Richard Teitelbaum, Carlos Zingaro

Joelle Leandre has put together this extraordinary band to be recorded live at the Sons d'Ors festival in France in January 1990. What happened on stage exceeded all expectations, and turned this project into an instant band. Marilyn Crispell - piano, Joelle Leandre - tenor, Paul Lovens - drums, Richard Teitelbaum - electronics, Carlos Zingaro - violin. The music is a great boost to the art of instant composing.

CD LR 298 STEVE COHN FEATURING REGGIE
WORKMAN, JASON HWANG, TOM VARNER

BRIDGE OVER THE 3-STREAM

Recorded live at the Music Factory in January 1990, the band of top New York musicians performs six original compositions by Steve Cohn in which he tries to reach a perfect balance between composition and improvisation. Reggie Workman is on bass; Jason Hwang on violin; Tom Varner on French horn; while the leader plays piano, shakuhachi, hohsho, shofar and percussion.

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because she waves her hands about a bit at the audience in the manner of a TV witch, casting a spell and flirting with invisible powers. It's no great surprise to find her gesticulating on Acid Mothers Temple's *Potatohead Freak Out* (Mute, Makoto Kubota's ramshackle Song-influenced mantra-jam, but this is a mere mystical holiday from her other projects). When After Dinner dissolved, she quit like music and spent the early 90s planning sound art exhibitions in Xebec, Kobe's high tech gallery and research space where Altered States guitarist Kazuhiro Uchihashi staged his influential Beyond Innocence festivals. It was here that she teamed up with Omolu Harada's bass player Atsushi Tsuchiya and Bedrooms guitarist Seiji Yamamoto, both of whom feature on her new solo recording, *Happiness Proof*, along with ISO's Ichirou Yoshimatsu. French machine musician Pierre Bastien and German percussionist Peter Hollinger. Happy with the home-made result – she insists she's happy all the time, actually – Haco has gone on to engineer Ochiyo Higuchi, the second release from the trio Hoshio, the determinedly idiomatic group featuring a wild palette of sounds ranging from the koto of Michiyuki Yagi to Sachiko Higuchi's sinewaves. Devoid of the typical Japanese hang-ups about the work ethic, she's taken attack by the apparent fury of activity. Kobe has an atmosphere she finds conducive to her textbook nature. Isobe is a little casual, she explains, with a lot of students who don't want to get a proper job. Tokyo is too much information. In Kobe you can find yourself more easily."

Believers (Krautrock, 10miles, 12.99)

She plays me "Hello Doctor Norton", her hymn to the bespectacled computer utilities icon whose life comprises little more than examining and scrubbing down a gigantic desk, a lost creature beyond her reach. But Haco's empowering pop uncovers a world teeming with meaningless yet enchanting activity, reducing human history to a moment of joy and making the trivial curiously poignant. **ED BAXTER** *Happiness Proof* is out now on P-Vine. *Hoshio* Ochiyo Higuchi's forthcoming on Tzadik.

Kimmo Pohjonen

Main squeeze

"The main reason I play accordion is to try to do and express things that people have not done or heard before," declares French accordionist Kimmo Pohjonen. He has chosen an odd instrument with which to launch a flight into the unknown. Despised for many years by hipsters and contemporary composers alike, the accordion has more recently become a rather heartwarming instrument, welcomed into musical salons as almost a guarantee of blue collar authenticity or Latin flair. But can the accordion free itself from its folksy associations enough to take the musician deep into unmapped territories? In the States there is Pauline Oliveros, contemplating the vast spaces opened up by her Deep Listening Band, and Guy Kuceksek, who has played accordion with John Zorn and other down-the-line New Yorkers. And in Finland there is Kimmo Pohjonen. "I started to play at the age of ten, in 1974," he recalls. "My father played, and still does, so I played first with him. Then I joined the local accordion club, where there were about 25 accordions, but I was the only child in the group. At that time the accordion was considered to be so weird that I was very ashamed about my hobby, and couldn't talk about it with my friends. When they saw my picture in the local newspaper, me with my accordion, they had a good reason to give me a hard time! But at the end of 1980 some of my musical friends became interested in what I was doing. I was invited to play in a pop band, which gave me a new attitude for playing. Also I realised that my instrument was not so out of fashion any more, many music makers had started to use accordion as a colourful effect in popular music. That gave a new credibility to the instrument that had previously had such an uncivilised reputation. Also Astor Piazzolla's music opened up the accordion world for many who had a negative opinion, many of them not even realising that the bandoneon is not the same instrument as the accordion."

After studies at Helsinki Conservatory, Pohjonen flung himself into a busy career, playing on more than ten albums a year and switching from folk to rock to avant garde styles within a dozen different groups. Even though he has moved away from folk music, he has

been named Finland's Folk Musician of the Year four times in as many years. "Ten years ago I was very keen on folk music and I played it a lot," he says. "Nowadays I am a bit tired of it. I think it's in our nature that we want to find new things as well as preserve the old things. For me, it's time to create new things."

In 1997 Pohjonen brought his solo show to an accordion festival on London's South Bank. Dramatically lit and swathed in smoke, he provided the darkest, most hellish music of the festival. The accordion belows gasped and heaved through loops and delays, conjuring up a sinking ship lashed by a storm. Like some torture engine painted by Hieronymus Bosch, for the finale the accordion dragged him down into hell amidst sombre rhythms and moans. "I had a great experience at my gig in Berlin last year," Pohjonen relates. "When it came to that part, which by the way isn't always exactly the same, the audience spontaneously cheered and applauded. It was quite overwhelming, like a mixture of wonder, thrill and even affection. I was deeply moved. The main thing for me is to try to make music that will somehow transport the audience to a different world from where they normally are."

Pohjonen's excellent solo album *Kello*, released in March last year, showcases his extraordinary range. Incorporating folk and Techno rhythms, he also adds eerie harmonium to 'Kontuna', over which his voice squeaks like the ools of Gormenghast. For most of this March, Pohjonen is touring with one of Finland's most popular rock singersongwriters, Iispo Alanko. 'Alenki is famous for using powerful electric guitars,' Pohjonen explains. 'The guitar player of his band, the one who does the heavy solos, is actually an accordionist [Pohjonen himself]. At the moment we are doing a performance called *Lento*, with 11 musicians, two dancers and a designer who has planned special theatre and visual effects,' he continues. 'For example, we tried to develop new effects for my accordion. The idea was to use a material that allows us to put water and lights in the bellows. Unfortunately we couldn't find a way to do it.'

As well as solo performances in Canada and Russia, Pohjonen will play improvised music on a tour with French jazz percussionist Eric Emparé. An orchestral project is also in the pipeline. 'This doesn't mean that it will be traditional classical music, though,' Pohjonen reassures. 'I try to approach these musicians in a totally different way from what they have experienced before. Improvising is one area to explore with this project, and I have been developing for them the same kind of sound system that I use in my solo concerts.'

"Nowadays I don't listen to so much accordion music any more," he continues. "The latest accordion record I really enjoyed was [Madagascar] Regis Gotsio's album. He has a good spirit. I used to like some old Finnish two-row players, but most of them have passed away. If I hear classical accordion it's too cold, not passionate enough for me. Or, if it's folk music, it's often too ordinary for my taste, although there certainly are exceptions. Maybe that's the reason I try to find a new kind of expression for the instrument I love." **CLIVE BELL**



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interstellar overdrive

In 1965, John Coltrane chose drummer Rashied Ali to accompany his journey into interstellar space. Today, a new ecstatic generation, including Nels Cline and Gregg Bendian, is chasing their cosmic trails. Words: Howard Mandel. Photos: Melanie Grizzel



"**W**ow" says drummer Rashied Ali, bemused, proud, even a little awed. He's listening closely to *Interstellar Space Revisited*, drummer Gregg Bendian and guitarist Nes Cines homage to John Coltrane and Ali's original still unparalleled *Interstellar Space*: turning the CD case over and over in his hands. He was are cocked to the sleigh bells and tom-tom tremolos that open "Mars." "That's a Rashied Ali lick," he exclaims. These guys really did their homework. I'm very impressed. They did the whole *Interstellar Space*? It makes me so happy — this music has been ignored for all these years, and there aren't many groups out there playing it even now."

Interstellar Space may have been ostracised by jazz conservatives and neo-traditionalists since it first emerged from the Impulse! vault, seven years after Coltrane's death. But for free music travellers, it remains a cosmic waystation to be revisited time and time again. "There's Dave Liebman, he plays some of it, and Prima Matera," Ali continues, referring to his own longstanding ensemble with saxophonists Louie Bellagio and Allan Chase (and for John Zorn), pianist Greg Murphy, bassist William Parker, Joe Gallant and new member Wilbur Morris. "We did a couple tunes from *Interstellar*, but not the whole CD. We did the 'Meditations Suite', too, and we've done some things from Trane's *Live In Japan* album. We've played Ayler's music, also Ornette and ROVA Saxophone Quartet, they've recorded Ascension."

"But you're probably up on it more than I am," Ali says suddenly. "I'm so busy trying to get the music together here."



'Here' is the compact basement studio he runs in the formerly industrial downtown New York building he's owned for close to three decades. Ali's studio is a functional workplace — it's for professional recording and upstairs rehearsal, not fancy or affected in any way. It's plenty good enough for working up repertoire with The New Art Quartet led by harmonica/guitarist James "Blood" Ulmer, tenor saxophonist John Hicks and bassist Reggie Workman (another former Coltrane associate), or for cutting demos of Ali's new up 'n' comers group featuring tenorist Greg Tardy, bassist Omar Austral and pianist James Hunt. But most of the basement is unfinished, with walls cut from rock. It's obviously underground, without windows. Not a dungeon, though — a bunker, or better yet, a reactor core, ground zero for fusion, fusion and free jazz explosions, a secret lab from which powerful emanations spread.

Leaning back in his chair, pulled up to the studio's mixing desk, Ali looks comfortably proprietary. However, he is as down to earth as any working man, if unusually fit and seemingly cool at age 64. He maintains his building — a full-time job and continuous investment — his family and his music, all with an air of pragmatic immediacy. He's always kept himself busy. In the 1970s, for instance, in the wake of his mentor Coltrane's death and at a relative peak of his own celebrity, Ali ran his music club Ali's Alley in this very building, an important corner of the loft jazz scene, and well remembered for pianist/saxophonist John "Jaki" Byard's rampant Monday night Apollo Stompers big band gigs (among other attractions).

At that time Ali also established the scrappy, monochrome-packaged Survival Records, which the Knitting Factory label has recently licensed for reissue on CD. Its catalogue encompasses Ali's albums with tenor saxophonist Frank Lowe (Duo Exchange), violinist Leroy Jenkins (Swift Are The Winds Of Life), introducing guitarist Ulmer (On A Roaring Ali Quartet), with his quartet featuring young bassist Stanley Clarke live at the Brooklyn Afro-jazz storefront The East, and one disc by street-savvy vocalist Joe Lee Wilson (who also ran a jazz loft in that era, Ladies Fort), titled *What Would It Be Without You?*

Ali was recording and touring back then with Alice Coltrane, John's widow. He collaborated with drummers Andrew Cyrille, Milford Graves and Sunny Murray, and in the 80s he formed the invincible Phalanx with Ulmer, bassist Srione and saxophonist George Adams. Over the decades he's studied with Philly Joe Jones, recruited with Archie Shepp (*On The Night*), and toured with Hot Tuna. With such a stellar pedigree, Ali has become recognised as an authentic voice from the avant garde tradition.



Rashied Ali now (main picture) and then (inset)

which after four decades has survived the test of time.

"I don't feel like an elder yet, passing down the wisdom," Ali hastens to maintain. "I'm not in that groove. But I do feel confident in my art form. I'm not involved in any schools or teaching or anything like that. Only in recording music and playing it."

Born Robert Patterson in Philadelphia, the oldest of three brothers who all became drummers in the footsteps of older cousins who drummed in the Jimmy Heath/John Coltrane circles of the late 40s, Ali has long been identified as exclusively 'avant garde'. He doesn't exactly disagree, and is honoured to stand for uncompromising music, but perhaps we shouldn't be so quick to pigeonhole.

Ali got his professional start with doo-wop and R&B groups before getting turned on to Ornette Coleman in the 50s. Back then, he swapped his drum kits with his brother Muhammad's friend Sonny Murray, and soon upon moving to New York in 1963 he set off on a tour of Europe with Sonny Rollins. Ali was enthralled with the era's best drummers, but contends, "I never felt I mastered straight-ahead; the conceptions of Philly Joe [Jones], Max [Roach] and [Art] Blakey I drew from their conceptions, but that's not what I was about. I was trying to master how to play the drums."

Although he exploited his links with a particular musical history circa 1965 (Ali joined Coltrane's group a few months after the blazing *Freedom's Ascension*), he lives in the clear present and the near future. His unique approach to rhythm, his interactive propensity, spontaneity and candour are as bracing now as when he first sat in with Coltrane at the Half Note in November 1965. Bold enough to ask for that chance and persist until Coltrane gave him the nod, Ali became a sub for Coltrane quartet mainstay Elvin Jones, then the regular second drummer in Coltrane's extended ensemble with Pharoah Sanders (as heard on the Impulse! classic *Meditations*), and finally in 1966, when Jones resigned from Coltrane's employ, he took over as the saxophone's manstey.

Ali's tenure with Coltrane was controversial from the start: early on, he didn't have the technique or experience to match Jones, and that polyrhythmic bombardier was not silent about his dislike of playing with the younger drummer, nor of Coltrane's interest in a second percussion held complicating his own. When Jones and McCoy Tyner left Coltrane, Ali was accused in print, and by the departing musicians themselves, of having broken up one of the best ensembles in jazz.

But then as now, Ali churned up rhythmic abstractions — far-flung tangents reaching toward the chaotic edge of the percussive galaxy. His continuous propulsion seemed to dislodge a regular beat, yet never completely abandoned common pulse. Ali's centre of sonic gravity was higher than Jones's, pinned to cymbals and snare more than bass and tom-toms. He would swing in the classic sense if Coltrane allowed him the space to do so, but he himself seldom instituted a conventional ching-a-ling rhythm. During his two-year tenure with Coltrane, obviously a time of enormous challenge and consequent accelerated growth, Ali dared to map out his own universe of possibilities. After *Meditations*, his courageous, flat-out energy, percussive stimulus and instant response contributed significantly to Coltrane's great, late albums *Live At The Village Vanguard*, *Ascension*, *Stellar Regions*. Expression as well as the monumental, four hours-plus of astral planeing documented on *Live In Japan*.

And then there's *Interstellar Space*. Recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey studio, five months before Coltrane's death from liver cancer at age 41 on 17 July 1967, *Interstellar Space* was released with little fanfare in 1974. Though never as celebrated as the deeply soothing *A Love Supreme*, say or the *Freedom's Ascension*, and perhaps not as immediately accessible as any of the Impulse! recordings of Coltrane's classic quartet, these sardine-drum duo, named after the planets in the solar system, were nonetheless immediately embraced by Coltrane aficionados as irreproachable performances, music delivered from on high and sent down to earth, representing elemental forces with sonic grandeur.

If *Interstellar Space* remains Ali's best known statement, it may be largely because its duos format leaves his work so exposed. Here as in few of his recordings with Coltrane,

Ali's every stroke and footfall can be heard and appreciated. His narrative sensibility while mysterious in its devices, carries the day; he helps every piece announce itself, develop and conclude his playing both dynamic and detailed. As the most transparent of Coltrane's late and reputedly difficult works, *Interstellar Space* won favour as a cult item. No wonder the album made Ali's career.

"Cult item?" Rashed considers. "Well, maybe it's generated some legendary talk, but if it were selling well, I'd expect that would pay off in more phone calls and some gigs for me. Which it hasn't. It may be a piece of history already, but if it's a cult item, it should still be rockin'... it isn't. Well, that's cool. Rashed is still here, and playing better than ever," he adds, not falsely modest. "Not that I felt back then that I got the credit I deserved. You know, Coltrane and I made that music together."

Indeed they did. The four tracks initially released on LP — "Mars", "Venus", "Jupiter" and "Saturn" — were reissued in 1991 on GRP/Impulse! with the bonus cuts "Leo" and "Jupiter Variation", and are scheduled for reissue again this spring under Universal Music's auspices. They comprise a very loose suite, linked by Coltrane and Ali's mutual exploration of motifs relating to those planets' distances from the sun, and the zodiac attributes of the Roman gods for whom they're named (respectively, from the liner notes: "battlefield of the cosmic giants; love, supreme wisdom; joy").

Revisiting interstellar space: Gregg Bendian and



Coltrane's tenor sax dominates, howling with enormous urgency across eight years of space/time, conveying a human heart at the core of it all. Ali rises to every opportunity projecting a fluid pace and dense hyperactivity from the get-go, boldly forging his own way, shadowing Coltrane closely — as when using brushes on the balladic "Venus" — but never locking the tenorist into a pattern or a tempo. Their combined power inflates the duo to the size of an orchestra.

"The way he plays allows the solist maximum freedom," Coltrane famously said of Ali to 60s jazz polemicist Frank Kotsky. "He's laying down multi-directional rhythms all the time." There's no decline of dynamic tension either, when Ali solos, as on the extended introduction to "Saturn" (*Interstellar's* 11) and a half minute climactic track.

Ali remembers that era vividly. "Trane was bigger than life," he says, and whatever he stepped into he would command. "He was playing with my idol, and I had more confidence in my ability than in my conception. I felt not so much unprepared as apprehensive."

"I never knew what Trane was going to do and he never told me what to do, so I did what I could to make it comfortable. I drew from the straight-ahead conceptions, yes, and I can't forget Elvin, because I got so much from him. Elvin brought so much to the music without Elvin there wouldn't have been no Trane. I was like an extension of Elvin. I had to move on from what he did, though, the same way that in my straight-ahead stuff I was always trying to find something else to do."

"Now I think my concepts big enough to deal with straight beat, and all around that beat. I can augment and add whatever I know, and if I've got the right musicians we can take it wherever we want to, return it to whatever it was. We'd do that on some of those things with Trane, took a rhythm like 5-4, 6-8, 3-4, 7-4, and start playing very freely within it. I'd keep the initial feeling there but play something

very different, and be fairly easily able to get back.

"I wasn't always sure of what I did then, because I didn't get a chance to sit down and listen to the playbacks. Word record and that was the last time I'd hear it. I'd damn near forget it until I'd hear it again," he admits. "But sometimes now I listen to something I did with Trane before I go to a gig to remind myself of something I used to do. Years, I'm still working from stuff I wasn't even sure of."

To try to recapture this exceptionally spontaneous music would seem patently insane, but that was the task that Nels Cline and Gregg Bendan two players from America's avant rock and Improv scenes, set themselves on last year's *Interstellar Space Revisited*. Cline is an occasional collaborator with Sonic Youth whose *Goodbye 20th Century* release covered some gritty modernist classics. avant garde dueling, it seems, is becoming a prerequisite among this enthusiastic younger generation. Before spinning the entire eight minutes of Cline and Bendan's version of "Saturn", a US college radio DJ announces: "When the album arrived at the station we all laughed at it — then we listened and I still don't know what to say" Cline and Bendan do not attempt to impersonate Coltrane and Ali so much as invoke them, by so alluding to their sources. Los Angeles based Cline and New Jersey's Bendan (self-described "white sloburban guys") give the jazz repertoire movement another wicked spin.

"I grew up listening to *Interstellar Space*," Bendan explains one night after performing with Cline at Tonic, a busy bare-bones jazz club on Manhattan's Lower East Side. They've just held the stage with total command of their macrosound for an hour, reviving *Interstellar Space* once more. They played loud, fast and furiously but without superfluous show; their interpretations of Coltrane and Ali's music were reverent but far from slavish. After all, how do you translate Coltrane's volcanic utterances into guitar licks? (Not that others haven't tried before: cf. John McLaughlin, Carlos Santana, even Roger McGuinn and Lou Reed.)

"When I got into free jazz, *Interstellar* was one of the most important albums to me," Bendan continues. "But the project came out of a joke. I was playing chum duets with Alex, Neil's brother, creating Coltrane-like vast sheets of sound, and Neil said kind of sarcastically, 'Well, if you're going to do that, why don't we just cover *Interstellar Space*?' We all looked at each other and thought, 'Yeah!' To prepare, I engaged in a heavy study of it, re-examined the records scrupulously, heard some things in the remastered CD I never had in the LP, did some transcriptions and struggled personally with specific musical issues — like where to put the one.

Nels Cline followed a similar process and arrived at his own decisions: what processing to use, what tone to effect, and never to attempt literally imitative saxophonics. Then, explains Bendan, "We worked together to decide what we'd take as source material, what were the 'heads'; where Trane and Rashed might be stretching so we should stretch there ourselves, when they'd pick up the tempo for a decisive compositional effect. We wanted to keep certain motifs — the sleigh bells were one choice, because we liked that texture — and maintain relationships we heard between Trane and Rashed on the record."

"I was very interested in how Trane structured things, because the pieces are structured — they don't begin and end the same way, or develop all alike. We wanted to know the album note for note, but not copy it note for note. We wanted to be faithful yet interpretive."

There was also a political issue in play in this project. This album has had a very big influence on everyone's concept of free improvising, though later Trane has most often been labelled difficult, wild-crazy, not understandable. Really, why hasn't his later work gotten the same respect as his "classic quartet"?

Lou Bolognesi, tenor saxophonist in Rashied Ali's current group *Prima Matera*, broadly agrees with Bendan's take. "What struck me as a teenager when I first started hearing late Trane," he says, "was the deep spirituality of the music, its understandable sincerity, and that here was a man honestly searching using music in pursuit of his personal vision and understanding of the world. In the 60s and early 70s that was in the culture and it was reflected in Coltrane's music, perhaps more than in any other."

It wasn't about blazing chord substitutions or virtuosic sax technique — it was somebody praying. It was about moving music forward, playing from a commitment to bringing honesty, integrity and self-understanding into the world," stipulates Bolognesi, who pours himself unhesitatingly through his sax on a lengthy version of "Saturn" on his dual CD with Ali: *Rings Of Saturn*. Ali plays openly, not trying to recapture anything more of his rendition from 32 years back than its basic inspiration. Bolognesi, too, avoids the presumption of appropriating Coltrane's recorded notes.

"There's really some healing aspect to this music, and it's a shame it isn't widely heard," says Bolognesi. Yet it's a credit to the music that it isn't chosen on airplane headphones channels, or that kind of thing. We're onto something right here: a music that can't be turned into a sneaker commercial or a movie soundtrack — that defines the integrity of this music. There would be an element of corruption if it were to be involved in the next Hollywood blockbuster."

"People still think it's a music of anger and rage," he says woefully, "but the musicians then, Trane and Rashed included, were involved in spiritual activities from Africa, the East, the gospel church — and they were working through their own anger, so the music was a process, eventually delivering them and their listeners to a place of peace. What Rashied's playing, his solution to all the problems posed by music, is so open, free, filled with love and mastery, that it kind of lets you know that whatever happens, it's going to be all right. Not in a simple minded way, his playing involves discipline,

structure, and a way that in another drummer might be very chaotic, a human sensibility that tells a story. If you approach it from a drummer's perspective he solos are full of mastery and complexity, from an audience perspective they're full of folk wisdom, wonderful stories and being alive. When I play with him, it's a wonderful challenge to live up to that. That simple perspective of telling a story — that the music's not just about the uppermost harmonics, circular breathing, multiphonics — keeps it real."

"I never felt I mastered 'straightahead', but that's not what I was about. I was trying to master how to play the drums"

Rashed Ali might say he hasn't gotten there yet, but he wouldn't deny Coltrane and *Interstellar Space* gave him a push toward his ultimate destination. "The music I play is definitely a continuation of that," he allows, "plus Nat Cole, Earl Bostic, Louie Armstrong, Pres, Belize — the people my father used to listen to around our house when I was growing up. My jazz, it had to come from somewhere. If people hear it as a radical break, that's too bad, because music is always coming from some place. Bolden to Oliver to Armstrong, Bix to Dix, Trane, then you mix in Cecil and Ornette.

"I think jazz is a music that makes changes — the music changes all the time, it doesn't stay the same," Ali avows. "I used to think 'making the changes' was just that, not about hitting chords or a progression on time. But you know, it wouldn't be jazz if it didn't change. It comes from the people — people who have different backgrounds, different preferences — that's where jazz comes from: change. It has to be different. That's the real change. And that change," he concludes with a sign "has been around at least 40 or 50 years" ... Rashied Ali & Louie Bolognesi's *Rings Of Saturn* is out now on Knitting Factory. Nels Cline & Gregg Bendan's *Interstellar Space Revisited* is available on Atavistic.



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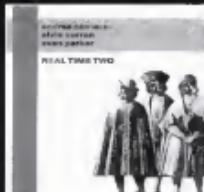
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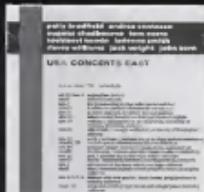
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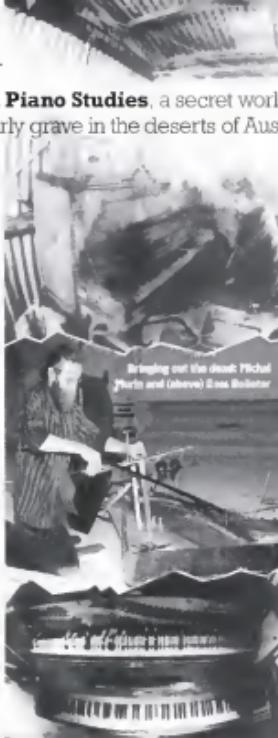
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Ed Baxter lifts the lid on **Ruined Piano Studies**, a secret worldwide conspiracy to rescue worn out instruments from an early grave in the deserts of Australia and Colorado

The piano has been under attack for a while now, assaulted by Laurel and Hardy, abused by Fluxus bricked up by Walter Marchetti, pushed off high buildings by cartoon cats. These elaborate and eccentric acts of destruction, expressive of an abiding hatred of the bourgeoisie, merely accelerate the inevitable. Death comes eventually to every piano. Some, like Liberace's might die of shame, others like those of Jools Holland, we suppose must lie awake at night praying for oblivion to overtake them, while those that have endured the sausage-fingered thump of Damanda Gates pray stoically for one hour under the healing hands of John Tilbury. But these are the aristocrats of the piano world, long-lived and pampered. Outside the concert halls across the world their distant domestic cousins are left to decay, and the myth of the elephants' graveyard finds a curious parallel in the hidden mausoleum of ruined pianos, whose weathered ivories stand proud like the fingernails of a youthful corpse, their bodies caved in and crumpled.

Australian composer and improviser Ross Bolteiter has devoted himself to tracking them down and bringing them momentarily back to life. Bolteiter is the instigator of WARPS, the World Association for Ruined Piano Studies. His *Left Hand Of The Universe* is a composition 'for up to seven performers playing lefthanded on any number of ruined pianos on three continents simultaneously'. The first realisation of the epic work took place in September 1997 in Slovakia (with ruined pianos: Michal Munn, Milan Adamoak and Zdenek Plachy), Colorado (with, among others: Dan Wiercek and Stephen Scott) and Western Australia (with Bolteiter and Nathan Crotty): a simultaneous blind improvisation designed to reveal the pleasures of synchronicity. Bolteiter is strict about what he's after: the piano has to be ruined (rather than neglected) (such as you find in the back rooms of pubs or your parents' garage) or devastated (such as you might find in a war zone or after an earthquake). The Romantic associations are emphasised in the realisation of the composition, whereby the addition of a human figure to the ruin completes the picture. Local colour is incidental: the deposits of 1 000 pigeons, the scem of the blood of 200 slaughtered sheep, the division of an entire country — each provides a distant background hum of endless metatropic potential which is obscurely undercut by the ruin itself. So too Bolteiter's insistence on only lefthanded performances emphasises the digressive and dreamlike, and lays claim to magical powers by which failure is valorised as universal, a sinner shadow cast across the ages.

Before its expressive articulation then, the composition is characterised by the quizzical and tentative relation of the player to the warped instrument and its fetal and unpredictable responses. As with some of the more radical of current probes into the structure of contemporary music (one thinks of players such as Nicolas Collins, Ikuo Mori, Keith Rowe, inevitably) *Left*



Bringing out the dead: Michel (left) and (above) Ross Bolteiter

broken musics

Left approaches instrumentation itself afresh in its perverse search after the abandoned and rotten. Its posturing of the player is suggestive not of a belated application of Jean Dubuffet's anthropological requirements of art brut — from the denitus of civilisation comes forth an unchoiced or insane raw art of incandescent iniquity — such that it overthrows and redemns the asphyxiating official culture — so much as an alchemical process in which said player is the secret ingredient precipitating a seemingly magical transformation, where an apparently exhausted resource

is encountered symbolically as well as physically. Mindful of the ecological element of rot, it embraces and colludes with the dismantling of melody, of purposefulness, of the instrument itself and the ideological edifice it comprises — a fitting methodology at the end of a century of unmitigating disillusion and worldwide waste.

Of necessity tuneless, the music of *Left Hand* is uniformly disorienting, a mournful celebration of its own relationship to 'proper' piano music. Bolteiter says, 'All that fine 19th century European craftsmanship, all the damp and unrequited loves of Schumann, Brahms and Chopin end up and degrade into a heap of rotten wood and rusting wire,' and the singularity of art music's monological address to posterity is subverted in the fragmentary, lefthanded improvisations on broken instruments. The fragments are perceived on the one hand in relation to an apparent original in the piano's former self, to an ideal piano and the monumental canon it represents (and on the other hand in relation to a new whole) (figured in Bolteiter's blunt question: 'What is a piano?') a totality supplemented and questioned by the abandoned ruin. This double reading, realised in a collage in which aloneness is allowed ample breathing space, makes the remix of the three geographically discrete recordings in the finished *Left Hand* truly universal and represents the ruined piano as a figure of a ruined world. Synchronicity, the psychic manifestation of this doubling effect, allows for unerring moments of lucidity in the flux of relativity, suggestive of a spatial collapse that further informs Bolteiter's rums. I'm rereading an anecdote in the sleeve notes of another of Bolteiter's CDs, *Cross Country* (a selection of his best work over the last 11 years), to ensure I'm not missing up his solo works with the transglobal *Left Hand*, when his voice on *Left Hand* starts reading aloud the set-piece anecdote about secretly playing a piano in the bush. Time collapses on itself like an exploding star.

Left Hand deals in — provokes — the inevitability of collapse, each piano struck or caressed in circumstances suggestive of the transitory and pastoral, a lurid eulogy over the Indian Ocean, the shambles of a bitter divorce in central Europe, the baffled ascription of a crowd of American music lovers. There's nothing exotic about it: on the contrary, this music has a strange familiarity, the vast distances between performers and the haphazard sound of the ruined instruments notwithstanding. The beautiful crashes, trembles and shudders of these piano are those of the uncanny dissolution of contemporary domesticity, summoning up visions of a wilderness only finally kept at bay by thin partition walls and warded off by the swagger of individual identities. Seek them out, Mr. their lids, let them into your life. — Ross Bolteiter's *Left Hand Of The Universe* and *Accordions Live, Eulogies And Wakes* (with Rob Muri) are out now on WARPS. *Cross Country* will be released later this year on Pous. Ross Bolteiter can be contacted at bolteiter@planet.net.au. More info from Michal Munn's Website: nic-sabu.sklogos.mca.com/~snezh, pages 1and097.htm

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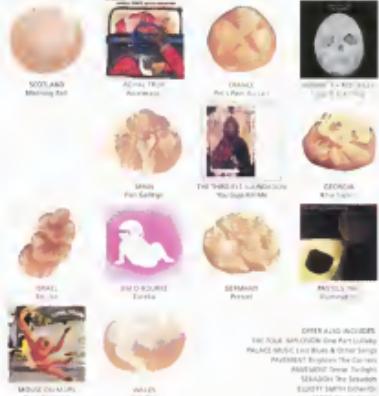
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23 years after their art attack first outpaced punk audiences, **Wire** have sprung back into rehearsal and finds them in rude health, combative and inventive as ever, and still



flies

action. Ian Penman meets the group in revelling in the absurd. Photos: Tim Kent

Over the river, a soundproofed room. Musicians and musicians: debris a yuppie set list, spent plectrums, stockpiled Silk Cut, a spray of Saturday news. Four figures in a room: four sculptors and the noise they shape. Four men, middle aged, short haired, unexceptional, unexpressive, kempt: a Beekeeper, a Swimmer, a beat farmer and a naturalised Swede. Bruce Gilbert: static, spectral, studying his guitar strings intently, attuned to the spectral hum he touched off 30 seconds ago. E Graham Lewis: a very marionette, tip-toe twisting and grimacing, throwing himself into things body and head. Colin Newman: right hand a blue blur thrash, a wry smile the centre of his familiar clipped Song. Robert Grey (aka Gotobed): sleepy faced, concentrate, a physical pivot. Four figures, and an instantly recognisable scene: Rock Band In A Rehearsal Room. The noise they make is an encouraging sound — wild, electrifying, rigged, taut, decidedly not the table-top imitation of timeless noise you hear emanating from so many younger bands. Here are Wire, an old chorus their here-and-now noise.

These days, you might say, everyone is younger than Wire. It is 18 years since they first thrashed out their sound in rooms like this. The Poffo dance, it's an old romance but they haven't gone to sleep. Cut forward: the Wire corpus now a sprawling conurbation and the four group members are hearing the nub of a run-through for a forthcoming 'reunion' (it sometimes seems as if their whole career has been a series of 'reunions': an eternal return of the same secession, shift and reassembly). They began their public history in a grotty ex-gay dive called the Roxy, whereas their return will be on the banks of a cultured river: in the genteel Queen Elizabeth Hall, there will be dance, video, DJ skirmishes, solos, doubles, disguises — and, finally, one more time, another Wire.

WIRE: dictionary definition = metal in the form of a very flexible thread

They have always been flexible, these four, indeed it's been a central and saving grace: never quite 'a Band' — tied for eternity, self-referencing — but never quite disbandered/defunct. Always another fluctuation up their sleeves, rarely predictable, a self-deconstruction in process, vigilant affirmation skirting the edges of negation. Good tunes, too.

One of the good things about talking to Wire around the interview's inevitable pub tables is the absence of the sadive save-croissante — contra the impression I'd been given that talking to them was going to involve a delicacy of negotiation to match the current Northern Ireland tales. Long Knives in Putney? Far from it. If there are icy crosscurrents blowing around the perimeters of the set-up — the odd flare as each member manoeuvres to register their own private illumination of matters — still there's

in the ointment

Reformed characters: Graham Lewis,
Colin Newman, Robert Grey, Bruce Gilbert



nothing to contradict Colin Newman when he says: 'Wire at its best is based on a totally unspoken language. OK, it's a bunch of blokes and they've all got different agendas and different ideas and of course sometimes it can be a bit head to head, but there was always the potential for a very good partnership of ideas. The fact that you're sitting here with me and Bruce together is a sure sign.'

A sure sign of a volatile but fruitful alchemy. Graham vociferous, spoiling for a debate, analytical, passionate going on paranoid to the point that... he'll hate this... he retains the punkiest attitude. Robert: self-contained, silent until asked and then (practical and self-deprecating to a taut) Colin: differently vociferous, an enthusiast firing in 19 directions at once, a wide open autodidact. Bruce: wry, measured, accommodating, wide angle moderator, long game enthusiast, most spy.

As anecdote often betrays history's true complexion, so first impressions can betray tell-tale signs... and on this showing, Wire are in ruddy good health. Lewis and Newman especially look aspic-young and fit. Musical health, too: if they were 'new' today, twenty-something years younger, they would surely be hailed as a nose-brand sensation. Earlier today they played so hard they blew out an amp, twice.

I think our past is safe in the hands of men such as these.

They're not calling this a 'comeback', even though February's South Bank performance, where they are returning to play 'all old stuff', will be followed by three nights at London's Garage, a low-key presence at the All Tomorrow's Parties weekend, even a short US tour. Today, Wire are promoting a history lesson, a Roopian, a flow chart: Four figures on a stage and the noise they make when together. Four figures in a room... and the clues they left behind.

They've been asked to reform before and said no: 'If you'd asked me five years ago I'd have definitely said no,' says Newman. They were asked last year, and, volte face, said yes. Given a proven readiness to fall greedily upon the 'new realms of electronica, concrete mixes and name mutability', you might begin to see one reason they have to stage themselves. A first guess: they saw the concatenation of current 'scenes' as an opportune moment, an ideal space, to refight their now voluminous and resonant archive. Changes in the last three to five years have recontextualised the way we look back, and what we find there. Now is a good time to draw a line from the link to that point. To hear old propositions anew. In Wire's case, not just their group catalogue, but all their 'solo' projects too. A chance to illuminate shared histories. For example the four albums Gilbert released under the Gong monitor (between 1980-83) deserve an overview to themselves. But one example will suffice for now: Go to *Dome 1*: Listen to 'Amphose'. Use it in blindfold tests on friends. Draw up lines to the post-Oval landscape. Redraw an epoch or two.

20 years later history is up for a second time and such outer-limber sonatas may finally find their audience. The posing of an appreciative 'community' matters, on some level. (It's so obvious!) Five years ago, they wouldn't have done me. 'So it seems to me,' affirms Newman, 'yes it's coming out of a positive period when all the styles break down, when rock music is being reinvented by youthful Germans.' He laughs fondly. 'So it seems to me,' affirms Newman, 'yes it's coming out of a positive period when all the styles break down, when rock music is being reinvented by youthful Germans.' He laughs fondly. 'So it seems to me,' affirms Newman, 'yes it's coming out of a positive period when all the styles break down, when rock music is being reinvented by youthful Germans.'

Gibert backs this up... yes, the whole 'sampling thing' that is today's event horizon has some definite bearing on this. 'I'm not sure if it's a conscious thing but I think the fact that we're not, shall we say, embarrassed is significant.'

Not embarrassed, hell no, because on any level their combined archives are a treasure trove. Gilbert as DJ Breeker at the beyond-Aphex end of club culture murmur and tremors and noches... noise like all the waves and particles you hear day in day out in the city... fightbarts, vehicular beats, warp through walls, ambiguous screams. Lewis, now resident in Sweden, engaged in splitting the atom of 'solo artist' or 'group activity' down into almost infinite/intransigent diversions, pairings, cellwork. Surprising work, from sculpted drone to cheeky remix. Plus Newman, most of all

perhaps, on whom Techno seems to have had a fully Damascus effect — his points refined and cells rearranged, generic makeup remodelled, a swimmer in new musics, looping from drum and bass to ambient Ambient, immersed, engaged, fired.

Unlike many ex-groups who return from the wilderness when prospects of reformation are dimmed before them, they all (with the exception of Grey, who turned his back on the rock life for organic farming, hanging on to drums on a 'hobby' level for a whilst) have busy creative lives and though it's easy to think of them (the W+3) as studio people, they all continue to play live in one form or another — even if as Gibert wryly says, it tends to be at 'strange electronic festivals'.

“Our own correspondent is sorry to tell, of an uneasy time that all is not well." Sometimes you suspect that there is a bit of deflection going on here too, but that's hardly surprising: They are full of enthusiasm for the present, and the current Wire and who would want to go through old in-fights, petty ego stuff or mindgames with someone stranger and his table recorder?

Still when Lewis gives me a bit of an earbashing, alluding to old (as he sees it) rock press betrayals (having objected to my too-casual use of the P word 'punk' as conversational shorthand) — traces of uncorroded anger show through, and, somewhat ironically, it could be 1977 again. Accumulated slights, a trace violence that is in one light just a restatement of their opening words to the Rosy audience in 1977. 'Pay attention, we're Wire.' Pay attention: it's the least we can do (and sometimes we don't even manage that). It can also be viewed as 'arrogance', which is probably a musician's practical recourse in times of (perceived or actual) isolation. On the one hand, they deny any residual 'bitterness' over times when their innovations were overlooked, on the other, they still appear to smart at being forever lazily labelled as the 70s era's 'arty punks', when in the course of three years, 77-78-79, and three albums (*Pink Flag*, *Choirs Missing*, '74) they turned 180 degrees away from any unkempt origins.

Musicians live in a world of microscopic studio detail, practical considerations, tones and calibrations. They talk of clumsily gating the drum sound before there were dream machines, of 30 foot tape loops that stretched around a room, changing bass strings nightly for a certain clean sound. As it happens, I have a certain taste for such details these days, but (they think) we just want to know if they ever punched one another out in the studio.

Eventually all of them... not just Lewis — feel a certain disappointment at the God that failed, at how soon it ('the bold air of '77) went away. Something in Wire wouldn't let them settle down, settle for less, settle for the easy options, the linear shape the old forms. And, underneath it all, there's a certain tender spot to do with the way 'class' in the UK still, deep down, pre-exists in every particle of any exchange or definition, every allowed access or blocked possibility. No surprise, then, that Wire met up at art college, a traditional destination for people with no choice in the game of self-invention. A laboratory, a social penitentiary, a centre for marginals.

“They project the image, which will in time become a concrete dream." As Newman readily concedes, 'Wire' wasn't really a mates band! And for that we should all be properly thankful — less of the 'last gang in town' buildit to deal with down the line.

The birth of Wire was in fact a kind of coup, with the W+4 taking over the structure of a pre-existing group called Overload. This was one of a series of groups ('various people in and out') engineered in and around the Watford 'campus' scene in the early to mid-70s by one George Gill, who Wire now fondly describe as 'half poet, half pea artist, a poet-yobbo'. Gilbert was employed as a technician at the college's sound lab so they had access to tape engineering. He recalls, 'We used to use the soundcheck facilities, pretend we were rock stars.'

Gill was at this point, the main songwriter, there was no drummer and a temporary bass player Newman, on the loose from a failed relationship, had enthused his way in. Gilbert brought in his friend Lewis, as both writer and bassist, and Grey (a friend of a friend of etc) was enlisted because 'all we knew was he had access to a drum kit and a space to rehearse in'. Now a live piece, at this point they were still mainly playing

fully material but recalls Newman, "the more interesting stuff was the more sonic kind of side of it. Three of us with one amp all plugged in making a fearsome racket with guitars. That kind of abstraction was actually more interesting than the songs, and when we realised that, it started to become something. We started to develop a repertoire I started to write... Graham started to give me text... and then George rather famously broke his leg when passed one night trying to steal an amplifier from a group he didn't like." Gilbert continues: "During the period when he was hospitalised we started rehearsing without him... and the first thing we did was cull all of George's guitar solos, and all the songs became somewhat more... truncated." An aesthetic solidifies around absence: the Wire Sound is waning.

One night, Gil's guitar strings all broke, and he retired to the front row of the audience, where he remained Wire's first fan. "That period was incredibly quick," Newman continues.

We went from being not good enough to play the Roxy to being, you know, on the like *At The Roxy* album that was recorded by EMI — all this happened in weeks."

The *Roxy* compilation was recorded collaborator Mike Thompson serving up a slice of anthropology: a look over the fence. Almost literally overnight, Wire were "being called in to EMI" and were soon signed. Did EMI think they were buying a certain type of "1-2-3-4" commodity? "There was certainly an element of that," Gilbert answers, "but we insisted early on that we wanted to make an album, we didn't want to do a single. Right at the beginning we were playing slow pieces as well as fast pieces. The fast pieces tended to be very short because we'd edited out all of George's solos so all the rhythmic stuff was suddenly gone and it was just reduced to this thing that might only last 45 seconds and went by in a blur. Basically what we could do was all start and stop together. It was all done with off-hand signals: was very bass led, and we did rehearse it a lot."

Lewis underlines this point: "It was really crucial, we really worked, we really rehearsed and rehearsed and rehearsed. We were always working."

Yet *Pink Flag* (1977) is one of those classic first albums that arrive from a complete nowhere (in both senses) like *Roxy Music* or *Horses* or *Marquee Moon*. Each song sounds as if it first passed through a wind tunnel before reaching public air — a rigorous screening test which has removed all extraneous fill or decoration. Some songs are little more than motifs delivered at breakneck speed — which is not in itself odd as many groups tried to follow a Ramones lead into speed blur and white out. What is singular is the range contained in these bullet/bulletin songs: sexuality, politics, revolution, biographies, media, the funniness of having arms. At 28 seconds in total, "Field Day For The Sundays" evokes its subject matter (tinfoil cap, codified splinter). It's as though the men behind these songs had been concerned not with the transmission of any prevailing *geist* or urgent social truth (I have the *Truth* / I know nothing) as Lewis backs with sardonic laughter but with... objects. Objects in the world, or in a room. Song as object, song as catalogue of objects, song as aerial snap or satellite scan.

Gilbert recalls: "Graham and I had the habit of sitting in pubs with notebooks and sliding them round like games of Consequences. Quite a big aspect of it was the joy of it... the joy of the Absurd... the collision of words and the way they sounded, you know? I think we took the words within the text quite seriously, and it wasn't. This is a Song About Something; it had to have several levels going on at the same time, that kaleidoscopic, multifaceted view of life which actually is reality in certain senses. Life's like that."

The music Wire made in the first phase of their existence, between 1977–79, is one of the strangest legacies of a strange time. The songs of the period are notable as much for what they *avant-garde* as what prevailing criteria they fulfil — notable for what they fleetingly tellingly detour. What is left behind is a contradiction of rock's inflated claims to social significance.

Gilbert explains: "It was a way of looking at the songs as if they were pieces of art or bits of concrete poetry. Quite a lot of them were big on reportage in that they managed to convey the 'horror of reality'

within a kind of objectivity. Were Wire songs not so much played as edited into existence? "Editing is everything, you know," agrees Newman. "I've always had a tendency to take liberties with the text as well... that comes of mainly not writing the text but writing the tunes, having tunes for lyrics, then grabbing a text and then just jamming it in willy-nilly whenever it fits, truncating verses, turning ends of verses into choruses picking up on one line and repeating it 17 times."

I recall something he said about loving new technology because it has music of narrative free it up? "That's one of my bugbears," he avows. "I'm a bit of an anti-narrative person. Deconstructing narrative is one of my obsessions. I love the idea

that something doesn't have to be sequential. I would sometimes characterise a Wire song as being like a list, it's a series of unconnected items... certainly on the surface. People will always look for meaning anyway... you don't

have to seek meaning on stuff. Meaning is very often retrospective, you find the meanings and you find resonance. I do love that about sound and music — it goes its own way, it has emotional and intellectual resonances which I find very hard to find in other art forms."

Other '77 era music, in comparison, now sounds like the work of playground bullies — belligerent, bellicose, blustering. Wire were a single condensed drop of subliminal acid, a single assassin's bullet, a single beautiful object in a bare room.

Four people in a room: Wire, fraying, circa 1979



From their experiences at art school, Wire didn't so much take an 'artiness' (as per later New Romantic pretensions) as a taste for concrete experiment. They were helped to a great extent by Wire's 'fifth member', producer Mike Thorne. Although he was an 'in-house' EMI choice, Thorne was partly responsible for the group's breakthrough moves into areas of synthesis and fracture, divergence and graft: on *Chairs Missing* and *154* Newman remembers being in a rehearsal room, staring at play "Practice Makes Perfect" and everything suddenly lit "The making of *Chairs Missing* was one of those moments when you knew: We were going very fast!"

"The turning point for me was when that incredible wall of harmonics began to develop," continues Gilbert, "and I thought, 'Ah, this is going to be OK. I wouldn't mind spending a few years doing this.' We took those kind of basic blocks that we had in *Pink Flag* and kind of literally shifted one item against another: that was how the music was constructed — in blocks — which went from being parallel to being shifted about against each other, which created some kind of angularity."

Gilbert had a background in tape manipulation loops and drones. Did that help, or was it a matter of starting from scratch? "Basically the job in hand was really to learn to play the guitar!" he laughs. "The link, I suppose, was the 'wall of sound' thing, where

you go from the song-based thing to something more abstract where you can't figure out who's playing what. The harmonic wall of sound, powerful dynamics and almost complete changes of mood within one song."

Montage in music music as montage. Cut n' paste before the sampled fact. New Wave as in Godard rather than The Police. If that was all there was to it, it would be easier to categorise them as just punk's token art school boys. But they gained a reputation for a cussedness bordering on sociopathy: a confrontational stance which meant Wire material sounded far bolshier live than in the studio. Newman puts this down partly to a general mood — "some kind of neuronic edge underpinning punk" from the start, and that became increasingly pervasive. And potentially violent.

Gilbert adds, "There was definitely something in the air, a feeling that something was going to be destroyed here. Something that had lost its way, that was... not just the music but on a cultural level — very sick and tired. There was a lot of fear."

"We kind of realised early on when we were touring the provinces in Britain that we were the Friday night entertainment," Newman remarks. "We were being poked and pushed, me especially, I was the focus for a lot of aggression. But actually, we actively pursued a lot of it."

Gilbert continues: "I think we had a vague air of impotence at the time we wanted things to move, we wanted the concert to move, wanted it all to move on a bit, and it wasn't, it seemed to be lagging behind, and the more behind it got the more extreme became our attitude."

This impatient attitude culminated in a series of experiments with gig form culminating in the infamous Camden Electric Ballroom night as captured on *Document And Eyewitness*, where a perplexed audience who came for a last chance to hear "12XU" found themselves facing something out of middle Europe 1919 Experiments in object relations. Staged nonsequiturs: Dada drift, not Dum Dum Boys psychodrama. The stage directions read: "Vocalist attacks gas stove" '12 percussionists with newspaper headresses', blank scrolls are unrolled. The strange thing is that such 'provocations' seemed to inflame the audience more than anything a Sham 69 or Angelic Upstarts could manage. Wire were heading out somewhere where there were no map refs.

Newman recalls, "The thing is that for the most part all the other Brit punk bands had basically turned into... well, rock, really, and we didn't want to do that."

By the time they released their last record for EMI the "Map Ref 4 IN 93W" single, it was hard to know what to call the music they were making. Definitely not punk, and probably not rock. Tension and suspicion structured the group's remaining dealings with EMI. Nobody could quite decide on a pigeonhole for Wire anymore. Were they the next Pink Floyd? A New Wave chart group à la Eurythmics? Each side took the

lack of a ready answer as an excuse to cut off relations. Newman says: "We would do a single like 'Outdoor Miner' — which was a pop song — and there would be huge consternation because EMI would be telling us they thought it wasn't long enough! Two and a half minutes wasn't long enough to get played on the radio."

Ironically, if Wire were one thing sans doubt, it was a great singles group. The plaintive poppy "Outdoor Miner", the manic glee of "Die Dash" and the magnificent "I Am The Fly", which cracks open on seven seconds of one of the great guitar intros of all time. All this and an insect-metaphor critique of international Capital!

In November 1979 Wire played a four night residency at the Jeannette Cochrane Theatre, a multimedia event called People In A Room, which I attempted to review for the *NME*. Whatever their internal problems, Wire live had become a powerful, jaw-dropping experience. Rawness had become honed attack, choreographed, mighty measured — what Gilbert calls the "wild but controlled brutality" of their live sound. Newman



jerked and gestured like a dying stork in front of a music of unforgiving power and subtle undercurrents. It was nothing like anything else around at the time. But proffering a pin-sharp deconstruction of The Group/The Gig was obviously the wrong gift for their paymasters Gilbert continues, "EMI? They were absolutely indecent! Having made the resources available to do this — instead of a showcase they got this experimental evening with a bit of Wire at the end."

Newman adds, "Obviously it was a kind of suicide note in a way, but it wasn't intended like that at all — we weren't trying to do anything to EMI. It just became obvious."

"It was our last chance," Gilbert cuts in, completing Newman's drift.

And then there was the post-Valentine's Day massacre of the Electric Ballroom, where they decided to go all the way out to the end of the line to make a beautiful production of 'the end of the group'. It should have been, as Gilbert puts it, "Wire doing a showcase in order to pick up another recording contract. We all knew that what we were doing, and what we wanted to do was so off message, it became so inventive that at the Electric Ballroom we almost invented a future Wire for that evening. And better to leave it at that — this Future Wire — than to try and present some cynical showcase."

"What characterizes 'Innoculator' here is the fact that the lines of flight — create an irreversible aspiration for new spaces of liberty" — Felix Guattari

Wire were avatars of 'Innoculator' logic before their time or rather, in their own time, and at their own pace. Denominations such as 'solo' and 'group' and 'Guru' became meaningless after a certain point. As if they seemed to realise early on (soon after that Roxy support slot?) that it was being (in) a rock group that was unusual, not splitting one up. In this way we can see the lines opened up by their first 'split' as positive, not negative, releasing all these insame root systems and temporary autonomous zones. Walls down, new map refs cleared.

Fugitive figures — crossing the border. If they had never been a 'mates' group to begin with, then there was no real 'falling out'. Rather it was like an experiment had reached its natural end, and the result could now be split off into three or four new directions. Such a quasi-scientific approach goes against rock's cherished 'gong' mentality. And unlike other groups where solo careers go no further than bad versions of R&B classics in the local pub, the early 80s saw a positive downpour of solo work. Newman had three solo records out before the end of 1981. Gilbert and Lewis teamed up under such guises as Dome, Duet, Emro, Cupof P.D. He Said and Gilbert And Lewis. There was other work, too — record production, soundtracks installations — a maze of directions, suggestions, occasional dead ends before they all hooked up again in 1985 for a one-off with new material at the Oxford Museum of Modern Art. A new deal with Mute was signed soon after, and following the *Snooker!* EP in 1986 they released an album a year for the next six years. Mute's *Wire 1985-1990: The A List compilation* is a good way into this block of new work.

Anyone worried that *Snooker!*'s popper aspects — a lighter, sleeker machine tool-ed sound — might erase the 'willfully brutal' side of Wire need not have worried. The best was yet to come: 1989's *The Drift* showcased Wire as a strict alchemical experiment, a flame monotonously tended, a momentum grabbed from the air and carried into several beyonds. *'The Drift'* is less a song than a sonic parchment viciously and repetitively subjected to a series of harsh treatments. It's also the thing the four



summoning generation that now in its early twenties, they've grown up with dance music... they're not gonna be doing music their older brothers or dads did, they're gonna be doing something else. Reinventing the rock band in 95 different ways?"

Gilbert registers a vote for 'strange hybrids' and modern handiworks like Farmers Manual. "They do play live like a band, but everything is Powerbook. They come from a generation who've never heard of Wire or Depeche Mode or whatever — their musical cues come from completely different areas, not musical at all, much more to do with arcade games. Say it's almost academic... pure electronic noise that can be reproduced with digital processing — and to me that's really exciting."

Newman also carries a jagged enthusiasm for the barely tapped potential of crossovers and overlaps in the latest technologies: "CD based releases on which you can have music, you can have visual art, you can have music and visual art, you can have anything you want! Combinations of sound and picture with some kind of synergy, whatever! It's just so exciting," he concludes. In five years' time this won't even be an issue for discussion! Pink Flag, Chariots Musing and 154 are all available on EMI. Most other Wire back catalogue and solo projects are held on Mute and WMD (Wire Mail Order). An official Wire Website has just gone online at www.pinkflag.com. Colin Newman's Swinn label is at www.kleber.net/swinn. A page devoted to Graham Lewis is at web.mit.edu/edlund/www/wirews.html. Wire perform at the All Tomorrow's Parties festival in April and three nights at London Garage in May.



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darkness invisible

Since severing connections with Cabaret Voltaire in the mid-90s, **Richard H Kirk** has remained in Sheffield to probe the underbelly of the electronic age, unravelling the codes that control the urban landscape.

Words: Ken Hollings.
Photos: Nik Strangelove



For your safety this area is subject to closed circuit television surveillance. The city viewed from every dimension is in danger of disappearing altogether. It will ultimately cease to exist anywhere except as a two-dimensional electronic image, constantly erasing and replacing itself on the hours of video tape produced by the closed circuit surveillance cameras on every tower block and street corner. Up ahead's the foundry where they built Saddam Hussein's supergun." Richard H Kirk announces as he swings his car out into Sheffield's un hurried afternoon traffic. "They sent a film crew over from the States to make some TV movie about it." Empty clubs and railway buildings slide by. Scenes from the nuclear holocaust drama *Threads* were filmed here, amid the shells of Victorian buildings, in the old abandoned Royal Infirmary. "Afterwards the whole place was covered with bits of melted glass," he recalls. "We were shooting a Cabs video there at the time." For 25 years, from Cabaret Voltaire's earliest tape collages to the smooth surfaces and burnished Techno rhythms of more recent releases, Kirk has been creating music, either under his own name or a bewildering array of aliases, in these sequestered, wind-searched environs. A line of ragged pink posters outside a locked and bolted theatre invites you to *Dance Yourself Dizzy*.

It's hard not to think of the Grey Industrial North with such an overcast sky and rain slanting down the windshield. For Richard H Kirk, born and bred in Sheffield, they still spell home. "It's always been a good place to base yourself," he asserts. "I'm fortunate in so much as I'm able to travel quite a lot, going abroad to play music. I

love to travel when I have money, and it's a good base to return to. It's a good place to work because there's not a great deal else going on. If I moved somewhere else, it would probably be abroad."

Kirk has just returned from Nantes, France, where he took part in Turn Of The Century, a three day event sponsored by the French Ministry of Culture. "They've got this whole building there called the Biscuit Factory which they've turned into an arts centre and music venue. I was kind of into it because they had Jaki Labezot playing with Club Of Chaos and I fancied seeing him. I ended up on New Year's Day playing in this installation done up to look like an Indian Temple by these people from Germany called Genetic Drugs. The entire stage was covered in flowers. It was really something different. For some reason they asked me to play on the Indian night, even though I'm not particularly known for Indian-influenced stuff, but I wrote a couple of pieces to fit in with the evening."

Factor in last year's live set at London's ICA, in which he presented material from his forthcoming Touch CD *Locustore*, and the critically acclaimed sound warfare project called *Darkness At Noon*, plus a new Electronic Eye album coming out on his own Alphaphone label, and it's tempting to say that Richard H Kirk is back. Except that he never went away.

Inspired by a visit to Vienna, where Kirk was scheduled to perform in an electronic music festival at the height of the Kosovo crisis, the ugly, raw and angry eruption of sound that is *Darkness At Noon* conveys in the starkest terms possible the numbing compression of time and space that occurs in the information age. "Last year I felt like I went into combat mode somehow and was into doing some really aggressive music," Kirk asserts. "I got bored with things being too nice so I thought I'd try this instead, and it seemed to hit the spot with a lot of people. It's maybe reminiscent of some of the

older Cab stuff from the late 70s. Someone compared it to "Saader Merhoff". It's this notion of going back to go forwards. Take a step back and look at where you came from in the first place, then mappy that to now and see what happens."

Bunker archaeology

The barbed echoes of recent history reverberate around the room. Some of Kirk's earliest solo material can be found on *Disposable Half-Truths*, a C60 cassette first put out by Industrial Records in 1978 and subsequently reissued by The Grey Area Of Mut. "When we were doing the Cab stuff in the early days, we were looking round for lended spms. We found Throbbing Gristle's *Second Annual Report* and started writing to Genesis P-Orridge. Originally, Industrial were going to put out the first Cab material but they didn't have the money, so they persuaded Geoff Travis to do it, and we became mates. We travelled up to see TG play Wakefield Technical College, which must have been in 1978, and we found we had a lot in common. Then they asked me if I wanted to do something for Industrial."

Along with Steve Malinder and third Cabaret Voltaire member Chris Watson, Kirk discovered that they shared some of Throbbing Gristle's central preoccupations with textual montage, subversive imagery and sound manufacture. Graning metallic tape delays and processed loops conveyed the sounds of static assembly lines inside industry's empty bunkers, vast interior spaces that had long since ceased to function economically.

"As far as I'm concerned 'Industrial' was a term Throbbing Gristle coined for their music, you know 'Industrial Music For Industrial People'." Kirk groans. "We also got tagged with it by winters who just came up and thought, 'Sheffield... industrial city'



then put two and two together and perhaps made five. I don't dislike the term 'industry', but it's not something we promoted as an identity. TG's Chris Carter was always way ahead of his time with sequencing and electronics. We always learned quite a bit from him. He always seemed to have the new toys before anyone else, like one of the first programmable beatboxes. It's funny when you look back. I remember the Cabs getting this Selma drum machine which we used on 'Nag Nag Nag', and it had a drum roll on it, which was a big deal at the time. People kept saying 'Oh, you've got a real drummer now?' 'No no no, we've got a machine that can play a drum roll'."

Today, when every human resource is a commodity, the means of production have been relocated to areas less able to defend themselves. The Amazonian rainforest and the Third World poor are the new factories, while the former worker classes increasingly exist only as sequences of electronic pulses, phantom entities without limit or dimension. Urban centres such as Sheffield, Chicago and Detroit became linked by these rhythms. By the latter half of the 1980s, heavy advances in studio technology saw Cabaret Voltaire giving up some big time funk while on a collision course with the US underground dance scene.

When I first started hearing House music, I was mad for it," Kirk recalls enthusiastically. "I wanted to go and work in Chicago in '86, but for a number of reasons it wasn't possible. It was like a revelation, but it was also kind of unfortunate for Cabaret Voltaire because we'd just signed to EMi in 86/87 and made the album *Cook*, which we worked on with Adrian Sherwood, but the tempos were slow. Up to that time people were doing pieces at 100 bpm, then all of a sudden it was 120 bpm and if you weren't at that House tempo, no one wanted to know."

With imagery derived from US paramilitary groups and police surveillance techniques, *Cook* was a daunting work of propaganda, destabilisation and control. It urgently explored new lines of social defence outside the laws of production. The bludgeoning street rhythms found on *Black Jesus* *Voice* and the sampled exotica of *Ugly Spirit* — Kirk's solo projects from the same period — opened up further now frontiers.

"I didn't feel that I was doing enough," he worries. "They only wanted you to do one record every few years and then spend all your time promoting it, which is tedious as far as I'm concerned. I like to do something and then move on. I found that I had a lot of time on my hands. *Black Jesus* *Voice* was probably more influenced by electro than by House. It was done over a couple of years in the mid-80s. I came out with *Ugly Spirit* which was more Ambient without so many beats in it, and I thought it would be really nice to bring these two things out at the same time."

With its loose urban dance structures and terse reportage on Los Angeles gang life, *Black Jesus* *Voice* was far removed from House's jacked-up good times. This was surely club music's usual 'wave your hands in the air like you just don't care' stuff.

No, Kirk corrects. "It was 'blowing your fucking head off with a 9mm automatic' stuff. All that violent LA street gang stuff has been used a lot since then."

The lost dimension

At the *claim* (June 1992) Another dancefloor located beneath another decentralised post-industrial city block. To get this far, you've had to pass through the kind of heavy-duty metal detectors normally found at international airports. Once through an invisible electronic barrier you're in a controlled social environment. Up on stage Cabaret Voltaire are making one of their last live appearances. As the beats grow stronger, the group's visuals get heavier. The Rodney King beating is projected in grinding slow motion. Although it was seen throughout the world, the footage does not, in some senses, legally exist because it was ruled inadmissible as evidence. Slowed down, the complex reality of what we are witnessing becomes clear. The cops look as though they're dancing. Nightsticks are batted and swing in time with the music. Data and time are magnetically encoded on the tape, as if the footage were taken by a police surveillance camera. To understand authority, you need the right code.

That's always been a big part of Cabaret Voltaire and a big part of me as well," Kirk states emphatically. "It's like journalism where you're showing stuff, not making any judgment, just putting it forward saying, 'This is what authority does to people.' Then like, cut it in with something else that renders the whole thing meaningless."

Echoes of King's routine brutalising were continued in the dialogue lifted from *My Bloody Life*, Jean-Pierre Godin's 1992 documentary on the lives of Samoan street

gang members in Los Angeles, and relocated within Cabaret Voltaire's "Low Cost."

"This was just before the LA riots, and it all kinda came together," he continues. "It was really strange that we'd been using that material, and the next minute LA was in flames. I was collecting footage of all that from TV. There was one bri I saw where this guy was on the floor being shot. I only saw that once. It was withdrawn. I think it was fucking brutal. Point blank."

The BBC also withdrew John Carpenter's *Assault On Precinct 13* from their schedules. Mayfar that movie together with James Cameron's *Terminator* contributed to media tales of kids leading armed attacks on at least one Los Angeles police station at the start of the riots. Hell, if Amie can do it.

"What we see," William Burroughs noted in *The Invisible Generation*, "is determined to a large extent by what we hear."

The stripped-down, channeled sound of Detroit Techno underwent reappraisal in the early 90s, while Ambient freeform strategies and dub structures took control of the chillout room. The term "intelligent" was added to the existing Techno formulae. The low-impact steampunk funk of tracks like "November X Ray Mexico" from Kirk's *Virtual Store* or the shimmering rhythmic patina of "Fourth World Destination" on his first *Electronic Eye* album, *Closed Circuit*, fitted the equation.

"The early 90s were quite good because we'd gotten away from EMI and started doing more experimental stuff again, which was a good way [for Cabaret Voltaire] to go out," Kirk says. "The last thing we did was *The Conversation* and there were no songs on that, and there was one 60 minute long track called "Project BO", which was as radical as anything we'd done 20 years ago as far as I was concerned. It could have gone on for several more hours because I was into these open-ended improvisations in the studio where I had basically constructed a cut-up of voices and bits of dialogue from films, which we ran in the studio and fitted music around it, a completely improvised thing. There were several loops running on the computer but they weren't being controlled by it. It was all done on the mixing board. *Darkness At Noon* was like that, an open-ended improvisation, which I stopped after 39 minutes."

In sync with his Detroit counterparts, Kirk kept up his recording momentum under a number of aliases, including Sandoz, named after the Swiss pharmaceuticals company that originally manufactured and marketed LSD, supplying the CIA with prodigious quantities of the drug in the 1950s.

"I'd always admired George Clinton and Bootsy Collins," Kirk explains. "They'd got all these different bands on different labels, but it was always the same Parliament/Funkadelic mothership connection. That was always a big influence, and I kind of achieved that in 1994, which was my big year. I had six different albums, including Cabaret Voltaire, spread across different labels. There was *Electronic Eye on Touch*, a Sandoz album, *Intensely Radioactive*, *The Conversation* on R&B, *Virtual State on Warp*. At that time they were the two hippest labels in electronic music, and it was great. That was the year I peaked, and it's been downhill ever since," he laughs.

Speed and politics

Electronic Eye Al Jabb Sweet Ecstacy. An individual viewed from every dimension is also in danger of disappearing. "I've now done five or six releases as Sandoz. There's been other things. I've done as Nitrogen, Agents With False Memories..." Like a character from a Burroughs novel, Kirk inhabits his own underworld, an invisible presence on a street you hardly notice. Environments only exist as a series of influences.

"I mean a lot of people hate it because it's confusing your audience," he avers. "They

never know who the fuck you are, but then again maybe I don't either. Things don't take as long to do as they used to. Technology's definitely speeded things up, enabling me to do these different projects and make them all sound different. With *Neurometrik*, the new Electronic Eye CD, there's lots of different things flying in and out of the mix to counteract the fact that when you program stuff it can sometimes get a bit sterile and precise. So you've also got things that aren't controlled by a computer; they're just manually faded in and out, hence the mistakes and the delay. That's my attempt to bring in elements of chance and chaos into what otherwise could become very sterile."

Pre-recorded and found material emerge from the mix on both *Neurometrik* and *Logostatic*, forming labyrinths of randomly intersecting texts and voices.

"I've been collecting B movies and documentaries for over 20 years so I've got a very big archive to draw upon," he explains. "I work my way through video tapes and select bits of the audio that have some kind of meaning, or that offer another meaning if taken out of context. It's like the Burroughs cut-up theory. Sometimes when I'm working, I'll have the TV running and just randomly drop some of that in, doesn't matter what it is, just for the hell of it. When you're working that way, things sometimes get buried in the mix so you don't hear them, and sometimes they jump out. It's quite hit and miss, and that's what I enjoy about doing something like "Project BO". It's a one-off. You could never repeat it. I employ a lot of that in my live stuff. Usually I'll operate three DAT players. Some of the material is rhythms, and I'll have one DAT tape which is just cut-up voices and then maybe another tape which is prepared electronics, then the whole thing becomes a mix fading between the different sound sources. *Neurometrik* is probably the nearest to a live set because that was done in a similar way. I'd written a lot of material, but the tracks were too long, so I bought a MiniDisc player and dumped it all onto that, then edited it on there. I don't know if anyone's ever done that before. I just set up a bunch of stuff on the desk, then faded things in and used effects. So what you end up with on *Neurometrik* is a 70 minute barrage of noise done in one take."

Technology enhances reaction times immeasurably. Set against the crisis in Kosovo, *Darkness At Noon* cuts into the spectral realities of modern electronic warfare by exploiting the disinformation techniques deployed by the media. Illusion is a revolutionary weapon. "I started listening to shortwave radio because I use it a lot for sound sources and I kept picking up snippets of conversations relating to the war," Kirk says. "There are also these weird frequencies just transmitting numbers

that have been going since the Cold War. These are stations that you can tune into and all they do is recite strings of numbers in robotic voices. Well, if the Cold War's supposed to be over, why are the voices still there? I incorporated some of that, looping these numbers as an improvisation piece in the studio. And it was pretty nasty stuff, a lot of slowed down shortwave. I remember being almost physically ill after I'd done it because the whole experience had been so fucking intense. I was shaking, you know. It was so abrasive. Also when I'm doing something like that I work at quite a high volume so you can imagine the kind of ear damage that's involved. A lot of the vocals on *Logostatic* were also taken from shortwave."

As with "Project BO", conversations are sliced together into a continuous interplay of new meanings and contexts, carried over from one track to the next. A news report on a Central American statesman fleeing his own country with a forged passport and bag full of cash recurs on "With False Identity" and "Monday Morning".

"I find stuff like that is so evocative of the times we live in," Kirk enthuses. "Everything's fucking corrupt. Every politician is a lying fucker. I pick up on that. It's almost political, but it's not political." Drug consumption has always maintained a strong economic presence within industrialised society. Soon it could be the only one



¶ I find stuff that is evocative of the times we live in. Every politician is a lying fucker. I pick up on that. It's almost political, but it's not political ¶

The South American cartels are already able to cover their own nation's debts through sales to the West. "They've now got better weapons than the US army," Kirk comments only. During the early days of Operation Desert Storm, Bolivian Trade Unionists called for a huge increase in cocaine production in order to help undermine the American economy. As if America needed that kind of help.

The aesthetics of disappearance

Is it possible to take the Rodney King video out of context, when the authorities themselves failed to provide one? If those cops really were dancing, would MTV show it? Gorillas in the mist started out as the title of a movie, not a callous racial slur. Entertainment is assault by the media, 24 hours a day. The electronic city remains a closed circuit. Signs and meanings feed back into themselves.

The voices of cops and militiamen, scientists and shamans filter like ghosts through Kirk's music. Often their words are echoed and looped, so that they become superimposed, one upon the other. Neuro-politicians observe how the brain locates itself chemically in time and space. Pilots and weapons systems are fed flight coordinates. Old sci-fi movies and episodes from *The Outer Limits* and *Twilight Zone* offer glimpses of other existences now impossible to obtain. This is not about dreaming: science fiction has long since become a test site for products that haven't been invented yet.

"Right back to the 80s, the whole of TV culture has been a very big source of material for me," Kirk comments. "I've made a career out of recycling stuff from TV for the past 20 years. If you're doing things on a more underground level you can get away with a lot, but if you're on a major label you can't because you have to get everything cleared and I'd hate that. It would be a nightmare. But then I don't tend to sample from things that are too obvious anyway."

The shift from the radical tape editing techniques of the late 70s to the digital dance strategies of today has also brought Kirk into contact with new audiences. Last November saw him performing his first DJ set at underground club Remedy's third

birthday party in Sheffield. Kirk is enthusiastic about the outcome.

"I cheated because I just had two MiniDisc players and a mixer," he grins. "It was all my own stuff. I was playing because I don't get much chance to hear it in a club situation. I think it confused people. Two thirds of the way through the set this guy came up to me and he was really disgruntled. He said, 'Is it a chilout or not? What is it?' I was playing some of the stuff from *Logostatic* which is quite hard, and I'd break it down, then go into some electronics... To my surprise I didn't clear the room out. People stayed for the two hour set. It was good. A learning experience. For the last couple of years I've been playing live and it's helped what I do in the studio quite a lot. When you're out there in front of an audience, you can see what works and what doesn't."

A strong influence over Kirk's music since the early 90s has been his fascination with African culture and the dense green worlds of South America and the Caribbean.

"I went to Haiti in 1991, which was a stupid thing to do," he recalls. "It was quite a scary experience because it was just before they had a revolution. Maybe I got possessed there or something but ever since then I started using a lot of African voices and rhythms. It was so uplifting. I wanted to graft some of that onto what I was doing. There's a book Wade Davis wrote about his travels in South America, Colombia and Bolivia, meeting all the shamans. I'm fascinated by all that stuff and I love what he's into. I have this feeling that any disease on Earth, there'll be a cure for it out in the jungle. Unfortunately, we're still trashing the jungle and it'll all disappear."

The Earth's vanishing jungles seen from behind a ranswept window in Sheffield welcome to the 21st century.

"I was described as a cyber terrorist in one magazine and I haven't even got a computer," Kirk concludes grinning. "I'm still working with the same basic kit I was using ten years ago. I still like messing around with the mixing desk and using old analogue synths in real time as it's going down onto tape, so you never know what's going to happen. I make my mistakes in public, stand or fall by that, and I want to keep putting out music whenever I'm excited by it. There's always new stuff coming along to send you off on another tangent..." *Electronic Eye's Neurimetric* is out now on Alphaphone. Richard H Kirk's *Logostatic* is released next month on Touch.





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invisible jukebox

Every month we play a musician a series of records which they're asked to identify and comment on — with no prior knowledge of what they're about to hear. This month it's the turn of...



Bill Laswell

Tested by Peter Shapiro

A prime exponent of the cut 'n' mix aesthetic with some 200 plus albums of genre shifting music as both producer and instrumentalist, Bill Laswell first came to prominence as the bassist in the avant-rock-jazz-punk-disco fusion group Material. With members Michael Beinhorn, Fred Maher and Fred Frith collaborating with everyone from Henry Threadgill and Billy Bang to Nile Rodgers and Whitney Houston, Material was the house band for New York's multicultural, hybridising avant-garde of the late 70s and early 80s. Laswell was also a member of Last Exit, alongside Sonny Sharrock, Peter Brötzmann and Ronald Shannon Jackson, with whom he churned out some of the most explosive music ever made — free jazz as nihilistic punk rock. Hooking up with the Celuloid label, Laswell worked with pioneering Hip-Hoppers like Grand Master Flash and Fab Five Freddy, African artists such as Toure Kunda, Mandingo Griot Society and Fela Kuti, and with Herbie Hancock, he created the monumental 'Rockit'. Laswell's appreciation of Hip-Hop and new technology, and his willingness to jump across generic boundaries, not to mention his identifiable sound, made him a much in-demand producer during the mid-80s. His credits include Laura Anderson, Mick Jagger, Yoko Ono, Ryuchi Sakamoto, The Ramones, Iggy Pop, and P.L. McLean. He hasn't changed his peripatetic ways and has continued to work with just about everyone from Bootsy Collins to John Zorn. The Jukebox took place in London.

**HERBIE HANCOCK SEXTET**

"Be What" from *Live 1971 (Blu Jazz)*
 [Instrument] I have no idea.
 It's Herbie Hancock.

It was going to say it's like...

Sexton: When's it from?

It's from a 1971 bootleg which was given away with an Italian jazz magazine some years ago.

So that's the sextet with [pianist] Eddie Henderson? Yes, plus [saxophone] Wayne Shorter and [drummer] Tony Williams and [bass] Billy Hart. How did you come to work with Herbie on "Rockit" and "Future Shock"?

A guy that was working with him who worked for [executive producer] David Rubinson was coming to New York and was looking around for people who were doing different things. He had a big fascination with Brian Eno and he made the connection that I had just worked with Eno, so it was then interesting to him. "Through him, I agreed to assemble two tracks which I just put together rather quickly with a DJ and Daniel Ponzo. We took the tracks out to LA, one track was called "Earth Beat" and the other was "Rockit". They were pretty much finished except for the playing. And what about the scratching?

The way that worked was I went to Bambataa and said, "I'm doing this thing for Herbie. Who do you think is a really good turntable player who can play in time?" He said, "Why don't you get Whiz Kid? So I approached Whiz Kid, I think he was moving or joining the army or something impossible at the time. He said he couldn't but his protege, this guy called Cheese. I didn't know him at the time, plus I thought it was a weird name, Cheese, I don't know if he'll get it. Anybody else? So he said, "DST", and I already knew DST, so I used him. I put together ideas and concepts and he would sort of embellish them.

WORD OF MOUTH featuring DJ CHEESE

"Coast To Coast" from *Best Of The Old Skool (Strictly Blazin)*

This is from the early 80s, right?

Yeah.

I know this record. I've heard it before.

It's actually DJ Cheese with a group called Word Of Mouth.

Oh, it's Cheese. I didn't know anything about him at the time. A lot of DJs that I meet now really like him.

How did you get into Hip-Hop?

I started doing records and playing before there really was a Hip-Hop. It hadn't really happened yet. So I was doing funk-orientated music and everything from... improvised to rhythmic music with improvisation on top of it, and that's around the same time that Sugar Hill [came out] that Kurtis Blow came out, and that was everybody's introduction to rap. There was a period where it quieted down and everybody thought that it was just a funk thing that wasn't going to catch on at all. Around that time, Herbie the guy from *Celuloid*

Records, who commissioned me to do five records. D-ST, Fab Five, Phaze 2, all that kind of stuff. Right around that time Afrika Bambaataa & The Soulsonic Force's "Planet Rock" and Grandmaster Flash And The Furious Five's "The Message" came out, and it became official that this was going to stick. It was before the word "Hip-Hop" had spread out of the Bronx and out of New York, and we got in on the beginning of it.

How was it working with them?

Well, it was fun. It was good because it was my introduction to working with DJs, which is really a science. They're very thorough people. We were very conscious of records. I had a very big collection, but Bambaataa had like 30,000 records, just walls and walls of them. That was very impressive because that was our source where all the music is going to come from, from the vinyl. At that point I started to really obsessively collect vinyl with O-ST. When Herbie's record came out and it did well, we got a car and made a trip through the South and bought old vinyl! It was through working with DJs that I got motivated to hear more music and to buy more vinyl and get more information. It was definitely a DJ influence. In the same way now, turntablists are influential in that they are any instrument and you'll hear combinations that are a lot more inspiring than a guy who's just playing one instrument. It's still a big influence.

Are you still collecting vinyl?

No, not any more. I still have some, but I got rid of most everything.

FUNKADELIC

"Alice In My Fantasies" from *Live, Meadowbrook, Rochester, Michigan (Westbound)*
 [Immediately] Something to do with Funkadelic?

Yeah.

Eddie Hazel is playing. Is this an obscure thing or is this a record?

It's from 1971. It came out a couple of years ago.

Yeah, I've got that. I don't have it memorized, but I've got it. I got a lot of bootlegs of theirs in Japan one time.

Were you still in Detroit when they were around?

Yeah, I lived in Ann Arbor when they were doing live stuff. It was very common to see outdoor gigs with them and The MC5 playing together. There was an afterhours underground small club in Detroit called Sexy Saxy that was directly across the street from the Masonic Temple, and Funkadelic would play there when they were still rock like this, more acid rock, doing really psychadelic stuff. Long things with Eddie and Tiki [Fujiwood] and Billy Bass [Wilson].

How did you get connected with them?

I guess the first person was Herbie [Worrell] who I think I met working on the Noni Hendrix record [her self-titled debut], which was even before the Herbie record, like '80 or '81. He played on some stuff and I gradually reconnected with him and, through him, met [Funkadelic guitars] Mike Hampton. Later on Bootsy [Collins] got signed to Arista and I got called to work on a project with Arista. Once I met Bootsy, that triggered George [Clinton] and everybody.

How have their ideas influenced your stuff?

Well, it's a lot of different people doing very specific things. All those rock 'n' roll that they do is really Eddie and Billy Bass, and the way Tiki Fujiwood played drums, that's a concept, but it was the individual styles that made it. A lot of people are influenced by that feel and the way they created those riffs, it's a very special way of playing. The things Herbie did are a huge influence on how modern R&B and Hip-Hop are put together. George is more of a concept and word guy and Bootsy is more of a character. There are so many different aspects to that stuff that you can't say any one thing influenced you to do anything in particular. Then there's mistakes and disintegration which produce results like "Flaggit Brain", which wasn't meant to be a guitar solo — it was a track with drums, bass, everything — but everybody was kind of falling apart. George had to make a record, he just pulled it out and it became this Ambient piece which is a classic. It was meant to be a song though, but when you have people laying on the floor instead of playing, you tend to... Eddie was the only one playing. It was his moment of clarity.

LOVE CRY WANT

"Love Cry" from *Love Cry Want* (New Jazz)

Is the keyboard player the artist?

Sort of, yeah.

A tho? From the 70s? Some influence from Lifetime, it sounds like.

The keyboard player did play with Tony Williams.

It sounded like the guy was copying Larry Young, but I didn't recognise it.

It's *Love Cry Want*, a recording featuring Young, recently unearthed by the drummer here, Joe Gallivan. What attracted you to the whole black rock, noise, fusion kind of thing?

I don't know. That's the music I was around when I was growing up. Lifetime to me was the most important improvising rock band, and it really was a rock band. I just remixed *Turn It Over* by Tony Williams Lifetime and found about 20 minutes of outtakes and stuff that weren't on the original record. I never thought of them as sort of black or noise or anything. I just thought he was really strong, especially Larry Young. I thought he was amazing. And Tony, of course.

How did the Miles Davis remix project, *Pantholos*, come about?

I approached Sony and Miles's manager who is now curating Miles's estate. Around 1969 a lot of consideration wasn't necessarily given to the fact that jazz records started to sound thinner, smaller and less detailed with less dimension, while rock records started to sound fuller, bigger with bottom end and a bigger picture. That's what Miles was listening to, he certainly wasn't listening to jazz. He was listening to Sly and the Family Stone and different things that started to sound bigger and better. I always thought it was too bad that he didn't have the potential to make his records sound bigger and fuller. Teo Macero was making the majority of decisions in terms of editing and putting the records together, and he was very much on the payroll of

invisible jukebox

Columbia There's always been this concept that Teo and Miles were creating this music. I don't agree with that, either and I talked to Miles and he didn't agree with that either.

WILLIAM S BURROUGHS

"The Last Words Of Dutch Schultz" (private tape)

[Immediately] Well, it's obviously Burroughs. "The Last Words Of Dutch Schultz". I don't remember this.

This was originally released with some literary magazine.

Why is he such a big influence on you?

People always see Burroughs as this subversive character or as the godfather of punk or the homosexual junky. I always saw him as someone who really predicted all these things that came later, who was very concerned with how people were manipulated by control. A lot of what he said was really full of hope and he had this really shamanic quality in that way. A long time ago he touched on a lot of different points that we're dealing with now. I'm not saying William Burroughs is a great book writer, which he also would agree with. I thought his life was interesting and the things he said were really vital, and still are.

What about the cut-up thing?

Cut-ups existed before. That's just finding results with random processes. I don't really dwell on that side so much. We do that with tape all the time. I think that would have happened with or without Brian Gyan [the artist who introduced the method to WSB]. It's an interesting way of arriving at a result. He wanted to expose certain systems or mechanisms or ways of manipulating and controlling. His thoughts on control are vital and that's very important.

MATI KLARWEIN & PER TIERNBERG

"Afrodisie" from *No Man's Land (Rub-A-Dub)*

I know the voice somehow, but it's not a known narrator. It's a known painter. It's Mati Klarwein. Who could have guessed that? I actually have this, though. That's why I remembered the voice.

You work quite a lot with visual artists... .

Yeah, there's a connection with all of that. There's the sensibility whether it's film or writing or painting or sound or music. Listening, there's a connection with everything. Questions and answers always seem to be based on definition. The question "What's the connection?" There doesn't have to be a question, there's already a connection. The question and the answer are already connected. We could mess around with words, but it's already there, it's already connected. Mati was important too. The work he did was great. I'm sure it still is. I met him about four or five years ago.

Why do you think it was important?

Well, I was inspired by it. There was a lot of detail I could see why musicians like Miles and Santana would be inspired to use it for covers. A lot of images colliding a lot of details, a lot of unexpected contrasts. I think it showed where his head was at, which was a pretty big space at the time. I could anticipate there were some drugs involved.



JOHN COLTRANE

"Living Space" from *Infinity (Impulse!)*

I know this sound. I know I'm a sex player, but I can't remember. Is that a violin?

There are some strings, yeah.

I mean the concept is like Omete, but obviously the horn is not. The horn is Albert Ayler?

It's John Coltrane.

I wouldn't have recognised that. Something about the tone didn't sound like Coltrane. Maybe it's the recording.

Alto Coltrane overdriven strings after his death.

I know that record, yeah. I wouldn't have recognised that. It's obviously a Coltrane influenced sound, but I wouldn't have recognised it as him. The tone was too thin. Maybe that's just the way it sounded. The tone's not warm enough. But I actually like this record.

What she did annoy jazz purists... .

Oh yeah. This is a great record for jazz purists. Totally dense, chaotic strings.

The audacity of overdriving "the legend".

Well, yeah. I think if you're married to the legend, you have more of a right than just someone who sits around and listens to his records and never met him. I mean, why not? And the stuff she did was really out, the strings. It's linked in a way to *Panthaea*. How much flock have you received for that?

You know, you get good and bad reactions on everything. There were a lot of good reactions and it actually sold very well. It triggered some new interest in the catalogue and it put him in a different place. All you have to do is get a really good sound system, play that CD and play the originals. It's everything I was saying before about fullness and size and clarity. And I know Miles would have been happy with that. That's the most important thing. What was negative was that they immediately insisted on doing a remix record of a remix record.

FELA KUTI

"Gentleman" from *Gentleman* (Barclay)

Is this a very bad saxophone player that could be related to Africa somehow? Could it be Fela?

Was it the bad notes that kept it away?

No, I knew it from the beginning, but I was trying to figure it out. I kept picturing some guy from Africa.

What was working on *Army Arrangement* like?

He was getting on a plane from Lagos to come to New York and I was going to work with him. The idea was to mix this record that he had recorded here. I think, in London with Dennis Bowell. On the way from Lagos, he was carrying a lot of cash, so they detained him and put him in prison. The tapes arrived without the artist, which is always better if you're doing a remix [laughs]. That should be in your contract in future, that the artist should be in jail while you're doing the mixing [laughs]. That's a very 80s kind of thing. I got the tapes and I thought they were pretty bad in every way. Just like that horn playing, you can say what you want about politics and Africa and 30 wives, but it's just shit saxophone

playing. So I immediately did what I would normally do which was to add something that would make it stand up a little more, which at the time was Sly Dunbar and Bernie Worrell, who I thought played great on the record, replacing a lot of Fela's parts, and Ayub Ogund, a Senegalese guy who played really simple hand drums. It was not meant to be taken too seriously. It was just a job, clean it up and put it out, whatever. I was pretty happy with it, but Fela freaked out because it's not his music, it's not African music. Who cares? It was a job. It someone sent me the tapes again tomorrow, I'd probably do the same thing. He said some weird things and I probably said some weird things back. It's irrelevant. It was a job. It was a pretty bad recording of not so inspired music which we made an effort to make listenable. It's all down to perspective and intuition and what you do in the moment.

Are you aware of how hip he's become in the last year?

Yeah, I know they're re-released all the stuff. Fela was important and there was a moment when he had a good band, too, in the 70s. He was important, definitely. I just think that a lot of it doesn't translate in terms of musicality. He suffered a lot, I know his whole history. I think he probably gave a lot of encouragement to Nigerians and Africans in general. In terms of black culture, he's very outspoken. He didn't take shit from people and I think that was probably an inspiration. I think he got his initial interest in that kind of sensibility from being in the States and being around the Black Panthers and Angela Davis. I think when he was here, he was trying to be a trumpet player, trying to play jazz, which obviously would never happen. So it was good that he found something to say with the music. Take the rhythm and say something on top of it and I think that translated the message.

How do you respond to people who criticise the kind of remodelling work you did on Fela's music?

You can't think about what people say. I mean what the fuck does somebody know about what I did with Fela? That was a job. What did I do with Fela? I did \$10,000 with Fela. That's my business. I don't care what people say about shit. I've done enough things, they can't have everything and they can't like everything. Who cares anyway? It doesn't make a difference.

What about Paul Simon's brand of "global collaboration"?

To me, the Paul Simons, the Peter Gabrels, the David Byrnes, they weren't really interested in that kind of music, that music came to them later on. They can't go to Brazil or to Africa or wherever and take an instrument and sit down and collaborate. They can't go and play music. That makes what they do appropriating, not collaborating. I never looked at it in that way. I always looked at it like I'm interested in travelling, most of my best friends are from different cultures, we all play music together, we don't have any tricks, don't have any hype, we just stand on the stage and play music together and that's different. I feel like I'm collaborating with people who I've built long relationships with over a long period of time. I've helped them get into other situations by doing that. That's OK. That will continue into the future on different planes, I hope.



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sound check

In the wash: March's selected albums and 12's

Robert Ashley

- *Asian Dub Foundation*
- *A Silver Mount Zion*
- *Derek Bailey & Steve Lacy*
- *Kathy Bawn & Loren MazzaCane*
- *Cursors*
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- *Schwestern Nicols/Lewis/Læsøer/Sommer*
- *Soft Machine*
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- *Sun Ra & His Solar Myth Arkestra*
- *Tind And Tickled Trio*
- *U-Def*
- *Frances-Marie Uitti & Mark Bresser*
- *Volcano The Bear*
- *Juli Wobbel*
- *Susumu Yokota*
- *Otomo Yoshihide*

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Robert Ashley

String Quartet Describing The Motion Of Large Real Bodies
a.s.t. (ARTISTE/ARTISTE) 10.99 CD

Robert Ashley says that *String Quartet Describing The Motion Of Large Real Bodies* is the "potential orchestra" for an opera based on the text of *Laon Mencien: Chast And Brethren These Were Men And Women* by American poet John Barton Whigham. A simplified version, with one voice and synthesizer orchestra, has appeared on record, but it was never completed as a score.

This is a predictably strange concept from the Cage-influenced electronic composer. The *String Quartet*, composed and recorded in 1972 in a version by Ashley and colleagues, uses an electronic orchestra of 42 sound-producing modules activated by the performance of the string ensemble. The modules aren't specified because Ashley knew that the revolution in electronic instrumentation would render instructions rapidly obsolete. But he did have this advice for the string players: "The bow is drawn continuously but so slowly and with such great pressure on the string that the string responds in randomly occurring single pulses. A single direction of the bow may take ten minutes." These sounds go directly into a set of four loudspeakers, but are delayed electronically, then activated by the coincidence of an original sound and its delay. With 42 electronics players this is meant to produce an unmanageable variety of sounds.

The unmanageable variety is here limited to only one string player and a much reduced electronic form. The same grating grinding pulsations rendered staccato and stroboscopic with minimal changes feature throughout its 20 minutes. Two versions of *How Can I Tell The Difference?* use the String Quartet as an orchestra to similar effect but with more development. Reverb and motorcycle sounds near the first version to boiling intensity before fading. The second substitution artificial reveals it hardly makes for pleasurable listening but it's certainly unique.

ANDY HAMILTON

Orin Ambarchi

Insulation
TOUCH 13.98 12" CD

Like his peers Man, Dean Roberts, James Pilton, Fennies and Penman, Sydney-based artist Orin Ambarchi's work is rooted in long decaying piano chords, contrabass and wailing strings, often evoking the sad ethereal

usage Ambarchi re-routes the instrument into a zone of alien abstraction where it's no longer easily identifiable as itself. Instead it's a laboratory for extended sonic investigation.

Insulation is a well-mixed, neatly varied work that falls somewhere between the concrete constructions of Ted Crookslade and the abstract soundscaping of Ron Sonic and the Hugo crew. Each track is a self-contained entity exploring Irish terrain. Intra-chaotically layered climes to come, solastone incursions even as it goes along with no neighbours. Most surprising is how Ambarchi avoids any form of computer processing or editing.

Done with activity, *String No. 3* consists of manic, obsessively layered bursts of sound splinters and shards of punctuation exploding across one another, in a brilliant but not like a roomful of chattering, self-activating electronic toys, or clippy strings of code being pulled from the ether. Avoiding repetition, Ambarchi's spatial awareness is impeccable. "Simon" strings an assortment of carefully processed events around a series of pauses while "Lungs" forms a clever collage of ticked-groove clicks, beeps, busy tone blocks and shadowy rackets.

With plenty of low-end activity, the album has a particularly vocal impact. Waves and streams of heavy bass wash against the body or burst onwards in sudden shuddering jolts. Drones distort and spear outwards as instants while the layers of micro-activity bristle and burn against the skin.

DAVID HOWELL

A Silver Mount Zion

He Has Left Us Alone But Shouts Of Light Sometimes Grace The Corner Of Our Rooms
COSMOPOLITAN 13.09 12" CD

A Silver Mount Zion are a primarily instrumental trio which includes members of Godspeed You Black Emperor!. *He Has Left Us Alone* consists of two extended pieces divided into four movements, with titles like "Lonely As The Sound Of Living On The Ground Of An Apartment Going Down".

Stylistically there are obvious similarities with Godspeed, such as the cracked voices of the doomed, lead recordings fitting in and out of the mix, and a shared taste for epic, melodic bittersweet. However, the more slow-moving instruments are more emotionally charged with a melancholy warmth or humanity.

The nucleus of their sound comes from long decaying piano chords, contrabass and wailing strings, often evoking the sad ethereal

spaces of Polish composer Henryk Górecki. The real surprise, given the company they keep, is the presence of two pieces with actual singing vocals. The first, "How I Never Made" recalls the cracked test gags of Neil Young circa *Tongue*, *The Night* and *On The Beach*. Vocals form strains and emotives convincingly enough to give weight to potentially corny lines like "Let our hearts be lost on mor tan and plain glass 'Cause the people under it is a wonderful thing". His voice's promise of deliverance raises the album above mere doom-mongering and points the way ahead for *Coriolanus*'s esomantic sounds.

DAVID KERMAN

Derek Bailey & Susie Lacy

Obstetrics
POTATO 13.09 CD

Derek Bailey & Steve Lacy
Obstetrics
POTATO 13.09 CD

Occasionally Derek Bailey's guitar playing pursues a logic of the unfolding moment, with little evident regard for the other musicians present. It is as if he believed synchronicity of performance were enough to establish some form of coherence, or perhaps he regards coherence as a musical prerequisite. On the live album *Outcome* from Paris in 1983 and on *Obstetrics*, recorded in London last February his responsiveness is inextricable, although of a different order on each.

On *Obstetrics* his close attention to Lacy's high-energy percussions is audible in the chiming harmonics, strangled notes and damped chords interlaced through her asymmetrical trajectory. Bailey plays electric guitar with striking use of the volume pedal, swelling and reducing his sound to complement Lacy's refined dynamic shifts. Some of his best recorded work has been in duet with percussionists: Jamie Muir on *Dear Drug* (1981), John Stevens on *Playing* (1993), Gregg Berliner on *Bonzer* (1995), and Tony Allen on *Sonic Sun* (1997) not to mention his regular theatrical encounters with Hall Bennetts. *Obstetrics* ranks with the best of these.

The meeting with saxophonist Lacy is more of a contrast in the sense that each participant gingerly preserves their individual voices in ways that do not immediately suggest musical compatibility. A certain amount of respect but determined jockeying for pole position takes place at

Bailey, again on electric guitar, grows restless accompanying Lucy's jazz-infused riffs and heads off at a tangent. A woman of Bailey's Company sessions in the late 1970s Lucy shows willingness to push his soprano into alien terrain, but he soon gravitates back to the melodic idiom that suits him best. The divergence is rather less great than on Bailey's encounter with Lee Konitz, rather more than on his dates with Anthony Braxton. And the same tensions that arise from their respective assumptions also enable the shadow of coherence to take form here.

JULIAN COWLEY

Broadcast

The Noise Made By People
WARP/WARPS CD

Broadcast

Extended Play EP
WARP/WARPS CD

Housed in a faux-Saul Bass sleeve design Broadcast's debut album proper invites accusations of arch retro-fication as the music warms up with an opening salvo of asperated Joe Meek/John Barry meets Haven't We Met? Whatever, with its ghostly keyboards and a quivering otherworldliness worthy of Hammer horror, Broadcast's instrumental third track 'Menus' isn't undeniably very like Pram. It might take a few listens but gradually Broadcast's own identity seeps through the cracks. Fiercely for a Warp group, they parallel their imagined John Barry scores with their loop, sample, and drone experiments. They exploit these methods with real finesse on the album's closing track, 'Dead The Long Year', and again on 'Belly Dance' from the Extended Play EP. Irish Keenan's vocals carry an air of wistful detachment but occasionally hint at darker things, as on the mournful 'You Can Fall'.

The Noise Made By People plunders the anachronistic musical heritage of the TV and film themes that fuel off the 60s pop explosion as well as the half-forgotten Britpop era preceding The Beatles. But Broadcast distance themselves from such sources, transforming them into something strangely modern.

TOM RIDGE

Tim Buckley

Worries In Progress
RISING TIDE/PIAS/EMARCY CD

Tim Buckley was a Guru Who Hope upon whom few write after. I am here to hope for any length of time. He made nine studio albums before his premature death in 1975, but he never made the same one twice. His extraordinary musical octave range and unique long-term melodic sensibility set him apart from other hippy-era singers. Buckley's better work has resisted aging and continues to amaze. His revival has been long deserved, remedied somewhat by the early 90s reissue programme of his later catalogue through the label Enigma went under shortly thereafter and the subsequent discovery of concert tapes from London's Queen Elizabeth Hall and LA's Troubadour. Additionally Elektra, which issued Buckley's first four albums, begins its reissue programme with the release 'Goodbye And Hello' his sophomore album which remains

undoubtedly very like Pram. It might take a few listens but gradually Broadcast's own identity seeps through the cracks. Fiercely for a Warp group, they parallel their imagined John Barry scores with their loop, sample, and drone experiments. They exploit these methods with real finesse on the album's closing track, 'Dead The Long Year', and again on 'Belly Dance' from the Extended Play EP. Irish Keenan's vocals carry an air of wistful detachment but occasionally hint at darker things, as on the mournful 'You Can Fall'.

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TOM RIDGE

Show of hands: Otomo Yoshihide reviewed page 55



Asian Dub Foundation

Community Music
London 053820 CD/LP

Asian Dub Foundation reach a vast multicultural constituency of Junglists, punks, radical politics and fans of rap and reggae. Apparently music critics too — their last album, *Raj's Revenge*, was shortlisted for the Mercury Prize. The music itself melds into a good humoured, high energy mix of speeding breakbeats and reggae basslines, distorted guitars and rap polemic, snatches of Indian movie music and serious political intent. One of the most successful tracks on the new album is "Colour Line", which features a radical winter Ambalaawan Svanandan condemning the plundering of the Third World over a spacious dub beat, festooned with scraps of melody on Indian instruments.

British Asian pop has recently come a long way in a short time. Comershop's independent stance was rewarded with chart success, and now ADF, scrapping from everywhere to construct their own fusion, are pushing to the next level. ADF's appeal is simply that they have so much to say about Britain right now, both in the torrent of angry lyrics and in their explosive musical macegenation. One of the few very few groups currently engaging directly with political masters, they catalogue the "sheegozar notion" (ever looking "backwards") on the new single, "Real Great Britain". Elsewhere, their songs tackle the corruption of police "teenage culture" and the stock market's pride before a fall. Another favourite ADF subject is embodied in the title "Collective Mode". The title of *Community Music* refers to the music education body, founded by improvising drummer John Stevens among others, in which ADF had its original roots as a workshop and later a sound system. They now lead their own education projects, ADFED and the younger rap group Invasion.

The new album builds well on *Raj's Revenge*, with a sharper production and more variety. The closer, "Scaling New Heights", is a sublime instrumental in seven beat time, lively enough in itself but a cut-off by ADF standards. Musically, however, not everything stands up to close inspection. A few songs follow dull rock guitars chord patterns, and some of the Asian elements have been ticked off for a bit of colour. Occasionally the group falls into the trap of being politically radical but musically conservative. At a bulging 70 minutes, the album is too long by a couple of tracks. But a song like the ecstatic "Taa Deen", their tribute to Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, recalls well the enveloping euphoria generated by the group onstage.

CLIVE BELL

very much an odd folk period piece. Its success was deeply unrelated to its author, a gifted 20 year old communist.

Recently discovered unreleased studio recordings of Tim Buckley are now available through the release, available only via Rhino Handmade's Web site. Beautifully packaged, with extensive notes by Buckley's guitarist Lee Underwood, *Works in Progress* offers late that is new by strict definition, earlier alternative versions of songs from his third album *Holy Soil* and 1970's *Blue Afternoon*. But these takes afford insight into Buckley's generative thinking. Songs like *Holy Soil's* "Love from Room 109 At the End of the Pacific Coast Highway" are revealed as products of grafting and careful reduction.

Works in Progress finds Buckley on the run from *Goodbye and Hello's* orchestrations and studio sleight of hand. These versions reveal him in the process of fine-tuning the jazz-influenced, small ensemble settings which would characterise his next five albums. Dead Friedman's vibratoed added to Buckley's group hours before a New York date, is heard on ten tracks. The phrase "like honey in the sun" ("Buzzin' Fly") is a perfect description of what Friedman's mallets added to the music.

During back to his folk-madoura period — when he debuted it on the final episode of *The Monkees* (!), singing in front of a demolished car — "Song To The Sun" unsurprisingly stood apart from the free-metric, multi-tracked vocal improvisations of Buckley's largely ignored *Stanford* (1970), when it eventually appeared. *Works in Progress* contains the first recording of this black-romantic gem with Buckley parsing the lyrics "Were you here when I was [sic]?" as many a 60s folk singer might. The stratospheric howling came later.

RICHARD HENDERSON

Mira Calix

One On One
WARP WARP 100

Mira Calix is the alias of Chamal Passamonte, Warp's former press officer, and one of the trans behind Telepathic. Her's early Ambient parties. Following two previous singles, her debut album *One On One* is a patchy affair. "Me Heteo", a collaboration with Seefield's Mars Clifford, opens things well enough, bagy crackling drums of sputz form a mesmerising haze of blurred frequencies that recede in wailing trails of guitar feedback. "Skin With Me" is an excellent punchy piece of electroacoustic with waves of rhythm flickering restlessly about a dominating beat spasm and loops of iron-lung breathing. Here and elsewhere, Passamonte utilises a kick sound cloaked in reverb like a muffled body blow, orbited by insectile cluster.

Numerous tracks work through modes of repetition, attempting to construct a cyclical tension. But they often fail to truly connect as they linger and outstay their welcome. Harry builds a backing texture from processed fragments of Passamonte's own vocals, which

are chopped and looped into phrases and layers of breathy sighs. "Snowrow" offers a plodding, repetitive melody, elsewhere keyboard melodies are needlessly weedy.

Cut back to the seven or eight essentials, this would have been a far more palatable album, but at 16 tracks, it's cloaked with filler and sketchy experiments. By Ward's high standards, the very average *One On One* is a disappointment.

DAVID HOWELL

Astral Disaster

THRESHOLD HOUSE L00014 CD

In-spiral interaction, alchemical transmutation, entia energy, psychic phase changes — Cal's reputation rests on their application of the processes that occultists, alchemists and visionaries apply to the soul and body to sound. *Astral Disaster* the CD release of a limited edition LP (199 copies), seems at first to be a characteristically hermetic take on the same themes. You need to dig deeper to find something perhaps more domestic in its concerns.

If "Opener" (*The Avatars*) is a brief psycho-jumble of crooked and chaotic synth abuse, it is also John Balance's attempt to reconstitute childhood memories of watching *The Quatermass Experiment* on television. The heartbeat shudder and siren shimmer of "The Membership And The Fatherland" is as much a realisation of mnemonic ties of reawakening as Cal's suggested attempt to explore the cosmic connection between flying saucers and Krautrock. Insectile glossolalia and the mirror-cracked voice of Kate Bush bring it to a close, hinting perhaps at a connection between childhood trauma and alien abduction hallucinations. Less obvious interpretations would be preferred.

Reading too much into Cal's music is never a problem, although it's fair to say that travellers unwilling to apply their own imagination may well find *Astral Disaster* less rewarding. On one level, "The Sea Priestess" is a word, speech wush of vibrant quackster, a glistening ocean of hymnal sound on which Balance's surrealised entia sets sail. Partially written while experimenting with an obsidian scrying mirror, the piece can be taken as a pure eruption from the subconscious or even as a cryptic metaphor (complete with occasional pseudo-white noises) for the effects of ocean-borne polypian. "Mu-U" reveals the same ponderous seascape with Balance's voice electronically feminised to speak on behalf of the priestess herself. Other moods — an obsessive musical box, taut metal cables — emerge from the sea before odd transformations lead it to a more pacific soundscape.

If "The Sea Priestess" and "Mu-U" are the album's lengthy highlights, shorter tracks such as "I Don't Want To Be The One", about Balance's response to persistent and sometimes unwelcome visions, are on a more

intimate scale. The ability to connect the cosmic to the personal, as if they were the same experience, is one of Col's stronger points. *Astral Dossier* may not be instantly impressive — it certainly benefits from a wider knowledge of their interests than the sleeve provides — but it's worth taking the time to grow with and appreciate it. They remain one of Britain's treasures.

BRIAN BUGG

Loren MazzaCane Connors

Unaccompanied Acoustic Guitar Improvisations Vol. 1-8 1979-1980
FSTAFK YOD-E10111-14 4800

Kath Bloom & Loren MazzaCane Connors

Kath Bloom/Loren MazzaCane Connors 1981-1984
MEGALOGIC CD

Referred to by Loren MazzaCane Connors as the "Dagger Series" because they grew out of a period in the '70s when he was living in a rundown studio on Dagger Street in New Haven, Connecticut, *Unaccompanied Acoustic Guitar Improvisations* repackages his earliest musical releases, as far as they were released at all, first time round. The company he was dealing with, New York's New Music Distribution, went bust without selling any of his LPs. Unable to bring them home, MazzaCane was forced to leave a lot. So this boxed set, compiled by writer Brian Coley and Thrunston Moore for the guitarist's 50th birthday, is effectively its first outing.

Across four CDs — comprising the eight original volumes (each consisting of a single improvisation) and a previously unissued session — MazzaCane brushes and teases the strings, or worms them with some manner of bottleneck, in a trance-like manner, while moaning in a half-sounded voice. As his hands tremble and complain against the strings, the notes sometimes pick out a riff, but the sound here is gnawing, towards skidding and flailing, rather than finding its feet. It winches and wobbles in a perpetual tremolo, and you lose all sense of beginnings and ends.

As for the means, even Connors finds this music hard to hear: "I allowed it to happen, so it's there. It's pretty hard to take, though sometimes." The lengthy sleeve notes, reflecting on his degraded and anxious lifestyle in Dagger Street (New Haven was listed by *Time* as one of the three poorest and most dangerous cities in the USA), read like an extended attempt to find an objective cause for what "ended up in the music." This buzzing around, cast-lead fear, accidental deaths of friends, a chronic cough, his grandmother's stories about bonfires, and wild dog packs howling all night. But ultimately this is a dogged outsider construction which can't be reclaimed within any of the usual narratives of American Gothic, hillbilly-psych or boho

turn-out. This is primitivism at zero degree, and Byron Coley has it right when he describes the music as appearing "as its own stylistic terminus."

The album with folk singer-songwriter Kath Bloom takes you through the period 1981-84, after which Connors left the music scene until 1988. Selected from five LPs originally produced and released by Connors, the collection showcases Bloom's songs and her breathy, fragile take on Joni Mitchell. However, Connors' accompaniment with its de-pecked slides and moans echoing bleakly around what I assume is Bloom's fingerpicking, shunted the project from folk towards smaller avant audiences. Connors' moaning emerges with her voice like a wounded dog scratching around the entrance of a ramshackle kennel, and at times Bloom's Joni Mitchell songs as though she was weeping. Pitts Smith's tears

MATT FRYTHON

Michel Doneda/Erik M/ Jean-Marc Montere

Not
VIAO 001 CD

Erik M

Fratime
HETIA HOME RECORDS CD

The French improvising trio of Doneda, Erik M and Montere come together for the first time on the studio date, to create an agitated, juddering landscape full of fear, violence, confusion and sensory overload. It's hard not to see this as a response to the US-NATO bombing of Kosovo, which would have been in its sixth week when it was recorded.

Turntablist Erik M creates some setting dramatic loops, piles up the layers and engages in vicious needle stabbing and overloaded soloing on top. In this setting, Doneda's soprano is never melodic or lyrical, but always the strangest, emulsified evocation voice of the vulnerable, the frightened civilian at the mercy of naked military aggression. Montere wavers his tabletop guitar and electronics amidst heavily into the blank space as he cracks up the tension. His final mix abruptly cuts tracks short where the instrumentation thins and more traditional improv activity threatens to take over.

In comparison to the toruous accidents of Not and his recent solo album, *Arma* is composed with real precision. The sound is pristine where the others are dirty and overloaded. The piece was commissioned by Jerome Noetinger to accolade his series of 25 "Cinema For The Ear" 3" CDs of musical concrete and electroacoustics. Fretfully, Erik M drives on those CDs for its source material.

Where other such projects have failed, M has the vision not to get bogged down in his raw material. His keen feeling for drama permits him to behave as though he has whole worlds to play with, which he flashes lucidly before your ears. His strong

compositional sense and attention to detail suggest a close companion with John Islip. Both are mavericks operating outside the electroacoustic mainstream — and they're both legacies ahead.

PHIL ENGLAND

Eardrum

Last Light

LEAF 0007 CD/2LP

Laika

Clouds Looking Blues

TOO PURE PURPLE CD

Eardrum are percussionists Richard Orlundt Baker and Lou Cocciali. On their debut album they set out to avoid a 'Fourth World' mesh-mash, achieving instead a gentle, multi-layered, rhythmic mesh. Cocciali's soars clear of the ponderous grooves he favoured in *God and I*, and looks into the duo's mercurial, constantly mutating patterns. Melodic elements are provided by Nana Tsobeli's thumb piano (the Tsermanis singer, to this, is echo-delayed to stunning effect on "From the Nucleus"). He also plays flute and percussion and additional musicians contribute occasional brass.

The rogue element in this avant feast is Gary Jeff (from Mass) and his unpredictable live electronics. They are often semi-submerged in the mix, but break out in vast arias on "Low Order," "Last Light" (to from being a drummer's jam session — they play for the overall structure rather than creating percussive fireworks). Eschewing sequencing and samples, their spontaneous approach, including a live hand-on mix and treatments, has produced brilliant results.

Cocciali has played with Laika in the past, and that group also use the studio as an important part of their music making. They recorded *Good Looking Blues* twice, according to vocal and multi-instrumentalist Margaret Field. *Music* is a programmed template and then as a live performance. This, their third album, is both more direct and more sophisticated than its predecessors. Their part-electronic, pan-rock glides with a subtlety and rhythmic nous that puts many practitioners in both fields to shame. The deliciously shadowy opener, "Black Cat Bone," finds cool electric piano chords pitted against eruptions of flute and bass clarinet, drums and programming. Here their spacious sound is full of incident and detail, with scratchy analog synth curlicues and delicious creamy bass.

Federi sings, in subdued, almost rap-style intonations, but here her voice is foregrounded more than usual, drawing attention to her pitch, sometimes surreal lyrics. She tussles with trumpet and bass clarinet on "Widow's Weep," and on tracks like "Glory Cloud," she gives her voice free rein, adding some affecting emotional clout.

MICHAEL BARNES

Burnt Friedman & The Nu Dub Players

Just Letried

SCAPE SCAR004 CD

The latest release on Poie's Scape imprint, takes a subtler route through the minefield of reggae reconfiguration than that of the label boss's recent output. Cologne deejay 'Burnt' Friedman, vaguely known for his output as Nongloca, Urban Field and Flanger (and formerly SMC and Drome), has been a piece of grit in the electronica continuum since the early 1990s. *Just Letried* he's not only credited as programmer and engineer, but also drummer, *Beastie* the Boot, as well. Where so much 'faturday dub' is content to be driven by tedious programmed percussion, the music rides smoothly on the Bob's leather cymbals and criss-snares. The bass also steers free of cliché and often confines itself to providing a strong, single-note pulse.

Reggae is simply a starting point — minor key melodic, bass and echo — and this album has the imaginative sweep of a group like Tortoise (particularly the ear for the pregnancy of tuned percussion). The music also sidesteps the headnod here 'n' chalce solemnity of many would-be debaters (the 'group' last year put out an EP called *Do Not Legalize It*) and has its tongue-in-cheek moments. While the playful humour is refreshing, the clever pop culture leads into areas that *take* too sweet.

Friedman's heavily interventionist mix brings a surreal gloss to the music, while his manipulation of the sounds, particularly the percussion, gives the music its strangeness and buoyancy. Where the music is furthest from the sounds of dub paradise is where it's most interesting: the descending organ phrase of "Nut Selector," the rolling bass surge of "It's Thunder" or the vocoder and echo that feature in "Dub To The Music." Friedman's approach to dub involves creating compositions that arise from the spontaneous interference between the pre-recorded sounds he's running alongside one another. Eschewing the 'newness' that goes with most dub music, he's created a light but stealthy experimental piece of electronic pop.

WILL MONTGOMERY

Normand Guilbeault

Rock/Musical Plea

ANTHEMES MAGNIFIQUES AMD 7120

Louis Riel (1844-85) is one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history, regarded by some as a hero, by others as a traitor. In January 1869 the Hudson Bay Company sold most of its land in the northwest to the Canadian government without regard for the territorial rights of the resident French speaking, half-breed Métis, who appealed to the well-educated Riel, a fellow Métis, to lead them in their struggle. As secretary of their movement, he



Moondog

In Europe

KOPP KOP930140 CD

Moondog

A New Sound Of An Old Instrument

KOPP KOP133017 CD

Moondog

Elpmas

KOPP KOP133114 CD

Moondog & The London Saxophone

Sax Pax: For A Sax

KOPP KOP433333 CD

The first time Moondog died, he ended up in Germany. Born Louis T Hardin in Maryville, Kansas in 1916, he took the name 'Moondog' upon himself while living on the streets of Manhattan in the late 1940s in memory of a dog he once owned 'who used to howl at the moon more than any dog I ever knew of'. So permanent a fixture did he become on the corner of Sixth Avenue and 54th Street in his handmade Viking costume, complete with horned helmet and spear, that when he suddenly disappeared in 1974, the blind musician was widely believed to be dead. Paul Simon even appeared on TV mourning his loss.

organised blockades against government surveyors and was instrumental in the formation of the Metis, provisional government, of which he became president. The problem soon escalated into armed conflict. Nominal桂beau's *Re!Musica Peas* dramatizes these hearings in Manitoba (1869-70) and Saskatchewan (1885), culminating in the trial and execution of Re! in 1885.桂beau's position is pro-Aboriginal and he offers this nearly two hour work as a 'fier tribute to this national hero, unjustly accused of high treason'.

A patchwork of styles, including rousing

in fact, he had been invited by Hessisches Rundfunk to give two concerts in Frankfurt, decided that life in the land of the great composers suited him just fine and had settled there. A heart attack in a Münster hospital on 8 September last year brought the second, intensely creative, period to a permanent close, leaving

Moondog's impermeable spirit free to move on. His soul's exact whereabouts are currently unknown, but the opening composition on *In Europe*, originally released in 1978, offers a clue. *Viking* was written in the summer of 1976 to commemorate the launch of the American space probe to Mars. An elegantly simple piece for celeste, performed here by Moondog himself, its unrhymed counterpoint suggests the smooth exploratory trajectories required to navigate the solar system. It also sets the mood for an exquisite collection of musical miniatures, ranging from *Horned Farbyre* — a stately multi-tracked canon for nine woodwinds — to the swoopy eccentric *5/4 Waltz* here in Vienna. But the series of six Logindrás for pipe organ included on *In Europe* leave the most lasting impression of Moondog's art. The form impressed itself upon the composer when he first discovered the score to 'Summer Is A Comin' in back in 1938. The Logindrás is capable of conveying great emotional range in the simplest of terms.

They also feature strongly on *A New Sound Of An Old Instrument*, a 1979 selection of 13 solos and duets performed on the Brail organ at the Herz-Jesu-Kirche in Oberhausen to Moondog's own rhythmic accompaniment. Aware of the church organ's pagan roots in the pipes of Pan, he blends Baroque counterpoint with Native American beats in such vividly descriptive pieces as *Sand Lily*, *Frost Rower* and *Single Foot*, both which evoke the even-paced clatter of a horse's gait; when each of its hooves comes down separately. It at times, Moondog's new sound conjures up the breathy open tones of the old bagpipe calliope; it's because that particular instrument links the muses of Ancient Greece with the sideshows on the midway.

Moondog's most majestic and generous achievement on disc, however, is likely to remain *Elpmas*, an intricately engineered set from 1991 that represents, in the composer's own words, 'a protest against our treatment of aborigine people, against our treatment of nature, plants and animals, also against that idea

of a savage文明, the old Canadian文明, military marching themes, jazz and a vu improvisation, *Re!Musica Peas* is, on first hearing, an uneven experience; though greater familiarity with the composer's polyphonic method reveals a work of considerable emotional power, rooted in the musical landscape of Re!s time. English and French narrators speak for the principal participants in the action; the accompanying booklet contains relevant historical documents, but non-French readers will have problems understanding about half of it. The improvising, which accounts for the radical

rehearsal, is brilliant; the soundtrack is a superbly superior mood music and is able to dispel any doubt when describing conflict, or the threat of it. However, supported by Jean Daronne's flute, Lou Sabat's vocal and accordion improvisation on 'Le!B' is both lyrical and memorably poignant. 'Bacchus' with its solemn processional tempo and euphonie military horns, has an Ayler-like flavor. The excellent live recording documents the performance of a 12 piece ensemble drawn from some of the finest musicians in Canadian New Music.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

that 'we discovered the New World, when it is as old or older than ours'. Marimbas interlock over sampled balaophones in omata canons conveying the preserved memory of Araphao ceremonies, bird calls in ancient rain forests and the distant song of the whales. Viola da gamba sedately sets over plodding beats on *Wesward Ho!* as a 100 year old banjo picks out a tune redolent of the Western prairies and the Oregon Trail. The plaintive simplicity of the two-part *Fujyoma*, for strings, voices and dobro, prepares the listener for the acoustic expanses of *Cosmic Meditation*, an extended voyage into the 'Sinead Sea' of Ambient counterpart.

Sax Pax For A Son is, by comparison, a more muscular affair. Recorded in Bath in 1994 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Adolphe Sax's death, it captures Moondog's own Baroque dissections of big band swing in their purest, most dynamic forms. Moondog coined the term 'ZAAZ' to convey how this music looks back to classical compositional methods, as well as forwards to new combinations of techniques and ideas. Formed in 1991 on the occasion of Moondog's 75th birthday for the sole purpose of playing his music, The London Saxophone features members of the Apollo Saxophone Quartet at its core, augmented by Danny Thompson on double bass; Liam Noble on piano and a chorus of male voices featuring Peter Hammill, Andrew Davis and Stuart Gordon. The sparse wind arrangement on *Bird's Lament*, dedicated to the memory of Charlie Parker, brings great strength and subtlety to a piece formerly included on the 1969 CBS album of Moondog's orchestral works. However, the versions contained here of *Single Foot* and *Chaconne In C*, related Mother's Whistler, pale slightly when set against those on *A New Sound Of An Old Instrument* and *In Europe*.

In a musical career that spanned several decades, the superiority of one composition or arrangement over another probably had little meaning to so prolific and restless a talent. In fact, all four discs, which are only now getting proper UK distribution, contain little in the way of dates and opus numbers. Now that he's gone, there's clearly a lot to be sorted out. And even more to feel grateful for.

KEN HOLLINGS

Tom Johnson

The Chord Catalogue

K RECORDS K121 CD

Tom Johnson has long been one of minimalist's most original exponents. His composer of such pared down gems as 'Four Note Opera' (1972), scored — you guessed it — for four notes, has since — a piano and the recent *Organ And Silence* (1999) which incorporated lengthy periods of silence; he has put a new slant on the genre's desire for simple forms and reduced materials. Unsurprisingly his

uncompromising and austere naturalism has led to him being overshadowed by the more media friendly minnows Steve Reich, Philip Glass and John Adams. Retentiously ploughing through all the B178 chords possible in one octave, *The Chord Catalogue* merit a glacial reception at its premiere in Houston in 1986.

Johnson's bugbear has always been the Romantic and expressivistic legacy, hence his insistence on the need to avoid subjective self-expression. Or, as he puts it, "to find the music, not compose it – to discover instead of creating". *The Chord Catalogue* is thus that is an objective and eminently logical demonstration of a musical phenomenon. Yet, despite the apparent simplicity of its concise verbal score, it is a difficult piece as anyone who has tried to play it on the piano will concede. The composer is the only musician who has been able to play it up until now, although versions of it have been produced on computer-controlled instruments. As the rest of his work, however, *The Chord Catalogue* is more than just a laborious, time-consuming exercise. As the two-note chords are followed by three-note chords and so on up to 13, they begin to trigger all kinds of strange resonances, giving rise to a truly galvanising experience. At this point, Johnson's quest for objectivity seems to make sense.

RAMIA KHAN

Kammerflimmer Kollektief

Incommunicando
05 003 00301 2269 CD

Kammerflimmer Kollektief

Maandag
05 003 00301 2269 CD

Tied And Tickled Trio

EA1 EA2
PAYDAY CD 01013161 CD

The second best thing about being a reviewer is finding an album that completely undermines your prejudices. The very best thing, of course, is having your prejudices resoundingly confirmed. Noting that Tied And Tickled Trio are a Bosnian ensemble who place themselves somewhere in the overlap of avant-jazz and post-rock, I settled down to listen to something worth dour and bloodless. No such luck. EA1 EA2 is a revelation – a subtle, sly drawing on the productive side of 70s jazz-rock fusion and adding a contemporary spin through the use of samples and electronic percussion.

In much the same way that Patricio Five only have two members, the Trio is a six piece unit augmented by a further six guest musicians. All thisos should have 12 people in them! is their argument, and on this evidence it is a hard one to refute. They don't hide their influences – Herbie Hancock ses-

in the middle of most tracks, while others draw on the cool precision of West Coast jazz or the rich textures of Africa-British-era Coltrane. Some tracks can their own water well. "Utroni" is a creditable slat of Bawon duz "Sevastopol" only needs a Natcha Atlass wail to become a Transglobal Underground outfit.

Best of all it's a clearly focused collection. Most tracks are short, setting their agenda and raising the mood well before indulgence sets in. The same can't be said for the two albums from labelmates Kernerfurther Kolkedel (room translation Heart Attack Collective). Conceived as a pair, *Moanin'* and *Incommunicando* see KCR's leader Thomas Weber testing out two contrasting genres. The first comprises 13 electronic pieces, the second lets a small jazz group loose on three of these themes, plus three others.

The results are always interesting, but Moanin' strays several times into the doodling zone (Weber overplays the slow-build-to-cataclysmic dissonance) and some of the playing on *Incommunicando* is too doggedly strenuous in its approximation of Albert Ayler's free jazz. The demanding music made by Black Americans in the 1960s was rooted in political upheaval, but when its shapes and strategies are impersonated by Europeans it comes over as soiling for sowing's sake.

Even so, both XX albums have tracks worth cherishing. "Impudent" (Ion Manoloi) works up a galvanising head of steam as it soundtracks some unsettling urban nightmare and the cover of Robert Wyatt's "Went Late" (an Incommunicando is beautifully done with Henk Wensel's sparring violin lines soothng and grounding the fierce solo seassions of Dutch Foh). The Wyatt track is the one time XX admit that there might be something valuable in a melody. Ted And Tickled Trio knew that all along, which is why their in the album it's return to

AMY NEUMAYER

Steve Lacy & Irene Aeby
The John Mira Foundation Concert
ECDN 00001 00001 00

Sopranino saxophonist Steve Lacy and singer Irene Aeby gave this concert in Barcelona in June 1995. The recording was not planned for release, and as a consequence the sound is a little distant, with occasional initial distortion. During the first 18 minutes Lacy glides seamlessly through six teleological Monk compositions with evident mastery. If no surprise, the remaining 30 minutes is devoted to evocative realisations of Lucy's settings of texts by Herman Melville, Kun Schwitters and Robert Creeley. Again, nothing unexpected if you are at all familiar with his and Aeby's output. But hearing the duo without the Lucy ensemble's customary augmentation is striking how complementary their voices become. Aeby's singing is an acquired taste, inclining towards shrillness in the upper register, and a

rough forbidding in her deliberate phrasing. Still, her carunculated formality is an effective foil for the saxophonist's agile, immediately choreographed overtones. However, though it's presented with evident respect, this respectable CD is hardly essential, despite the useful inclusion of songbooks and a 1993 interview about their engagement with literary texts.

JULIAN COMLEY

Joëlle Léandre & Sébi Tramontana

EC 00001
00001 00

Joëlle Léandre & Giorgio Occhipinti

Inconducences
JAZZ-HOLO 00001 00

Leimgruber/Crispell/ Léandre/Hauser

Quatuor Nôs
VAC 00001 00

Schweizer/Nicols/Lewis/ Léandre/Sommer

The Storytelling Of The Winter
Palace
WAV 00001 00

Evelio is another of French duellists. *Leandre* is another of French duellists. *Leandre* is another of French duellists. Once again revealing her subtle inclination towards identifiably melodic and rhythmic gestures, isn't that common in Improv these days, when abstract texture-making has become the dominant strategy? In fact, she doesn't averse to setting up something approaching a groove on her engaging solo piece "Evelio n°4" and the duet "Evelio n°6". In this instance her duo-partner is a characterful Improv trombonist, Sébi Tramontana whose soundly sleek is best illustrated on the almost nonchalantly developed "Evelio n°3". He effectively deploys repetition on "Evelio n°7" – counterbalancing Leandre's searching arco strokes. Both improvisers waltz wonderfully while they work on a playful "Evelio n°8" which haffles the related atmosphere of these beautifully balanced dialogues.

Leandre's duo CD *Inconducences* matches her with Italian pianist Giorgio Occhipinti, whose曲折ness is infused with a gravity typical of Italian Improv and free jazz, while also recalling the late great Russian Sergei Kuryakov. His and Leandre's dialogues are both playful and pensive. They recast themselves as a string duo on "Part Five" and "Part Eight", where Occhipinti drives inside the piano for an extended range of ambiences. Leandre's melancholy bowing brings bluesy shimmer and Indian hints to "Part Four", to which Occhipinti adds a few carefully placed baroque flourishes.

Quarier Nor documents the first meeting of Urs Leimgruber (sax), Hans Crispell (piano), Trip House (drums) and Leandre again at the Canadian Musique Actuelle

festival in May 96. *Desnouvelles* is a Seiten-eght movement's in operation. Quartet Nôs Part 1, which quickly establishes an air of buoyant ensemble cohesion as abstract playing effortlessly mingles with free jazz. Yet for all their cohesion these pieces lack sufficient character to engage at an emotional level. While it's pleasing to hear Crispell adopting a less Cecil Taylor-like percussive strategy, her lycra still feels rather clinical. Leimgruber is too close to Evan Parker for comfort and Hauser's solo percussion is rarely more than workmanlike.

Finally, this is the second time around for *The Storytelling Of The Winter Palace*, first released in 1988, which features three performances from Cologne and Zurich. Here Leandre is joined by Les Diaboliques colleagues Maggie Nicols (voice) and Irene Schweizer (piano) plus trombonist George Lewis and percussionist Gunter Sommer. Nicols's loudest wailings aside, the Improv is keenly focused in its sinuous transitions from malfertilized to sparse activity. Schweizer and Lewis are magnificent in their assured control of dynamics.

CHRIS BLACKFORD

LOOS

Armstrong
00001 00001 00

If you draw a line from Futurism through Louis Armstrong and Sun Ra, and if your hand wobbles a bit when you approach Stockhausen en route to Anthony Braxton and then the no-bisness in the hothouse of Dutch academic jazz, you will find the LOOS sextet. Composer Peter Van Bergen attempts a synthesis of the aforementioned in a precisely structured way wherein decay and the silence which follows it are foregrounded in spacious, thoughtful music characterised by its honest to suspense and compressed energy. Melody is apparent only as a trace sensed in the aftermath of an explosion. Its residues are anger (which Van Bergen finds in the work of Ra), and madness (which he hears in the blues) – expressive indices of the process by which time is telescoped and the complexities of history are boiled down to essence. But the madness here is fully circumscribed in ferociously tempestuous compositions and the anger is suppressed in knotted muscles of tightly played fragments of 20th century jazz. A sense of disarray and controlled chaos adds an element of raw violence to the disciplined playing. It sounds like the id could blow off any time.

Van Bergen says in the sleeve notes that this is "not a kind of historical CD I don't want it to be seen as a rediscovery of Louis Armstrong" who I haven't realised had been lost. Rather it's a bold effort at reinvention attempting to project the indomitable qualities of a great artist and renew them surpass them in the present. If such ambitions are necessarily doomed to failure, LOOS seem unaware of any problem in re-creating the master. Their playing is self-

Bewitched pitch: Kid-606



Various Artists

Clicks + Cuts

MIKE PLATEAUX HP79 2000

Mike Plateaux compilations have been the stumbling block for successive waves of electro scops. While it's unlikely anyone'll go for everything on a given disc, it would be a poor mind indeed that wasn't waylaid by some aspect of these encyclopedias and their 'work in progress' from across the remix globe: a thousand plus one levels, speeds, grits, uses — things spreading out horizontally rather than along the usual linear vertical axes.

Because Mike releases tend to creep and settle and sleep, I gave Clicks + Cuts the benefit of the doubt when it initially failed to wow me. My previous (re)motions, I found it characteristically perplexing, but for uncharacteristically worrying reasons: after two or three months of playing the Ambient hell out of the thing, only one or two tracks registered, whatsoever, to ring around my head. For the first time since in *Herman Hesse's* *Deluze* broke down my resistance all those moons ago, it felt as if Mike P were a lag behind, not ahead of the current incoming. There are signs

confident, presage the deconstructed homage lens depth by a studied victory. The tends deconditioned rather than sung by Dennis Rudge are potentios, the *Derogues* of Seneca, the philosophy of Sun Ra, a futuristic love story for machines. Rudge's delivery is part impersonation, part campy patter. In their live sets he provides a powerful theatrical element. A tenor performer, his presence offsets the restrained pose of the instrumentalists. Rudge breaks tests into pieces and lots them into the mix as a word parabola: while the ground-code of the shattered memory of Louis Armstrong, the uprooted roots of modern music in Van Gogh's version of history. It's uncanny, demanding and impressively single-minded.

ED BAETER

Alvin Lucier

Theme

UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS

Lucier's approach to music couples the methodological severity of an experimental physicist with a taste for the kind of dubious conceptions found in the scientific romances of Jules Verne. *Indes* is his early piece (*Chambers* 1968) which investigate the acoustic properties of portable resonant environments, was directly inspired by an image from a Verne film adaptation: 'shoelace underwater explores wearing air-filled conch shells on their heads.'

His compositions are invariably dedicated to the process of teasing revelations from the

prose. *Indes* collects three pieces from the mid-90s: *Music For Piano With Magnetic Strings* was written for Los Sordos who performs it here. It evolved from *Music On A Long Thin Wire* (1977) in which a large horseshoe magnet and an oscillator cause a monochord to vibrate and song. *Sord* locates live small electromagnets upon her piano strings and interpreting a prose score, arranges the resulting acoustic phenomena to reveal the instrument's latent life.

The album's title track, *Theme*, sets a poem by John Ashberry to the voice of Sam Askey. Thomas Buckley, Jacqueline Humbert and Joann La Barbara. The setting involves putting microphones inside various vessels: including a milk bottle, an ostrich egg, a vase and a

saucer. Rotating vases cause these 'four small rooms' to resonate. The piece hints back to Lucier's best known piece *I Am Sitting In A Room* (1969), which uses a brief statement of fact as a key to open 'the social door to the sound situation that you experience in a room', and beyond that to *Chambers*.

The third piece, *Music For Gamelan Instruments, Microphones, Amplifiers And Loudspeakers*, is the perfect corrective for listeners deterred by the saccharine kitch that often afflicts Western adaptations of gamelan. Lucier has effectively emptied the instruments of Indonesian associations and appropriated them as enclosed resonant spaces, whose distinctive acoustic properties are explored quietly and alluringly.

JULIAN COULTER

The MCS

The Big Bang: A Beat Of The MCS

REVIEW BY JULIAN COULTER

No less a figure than author Norman Mailer described The MCS as 'the electro-mechanical clinic of our age', citing the group's relevance as musical troubadours during the Vietnam War era. To their audiences in the Detroit Am Arbor era, the Five were, variously: greasers fresh from the drag strip, who caricatured the hairy scene; the house band at Detroit's Grande Ballroom, loaned by the visiting English acts for whom the Five would open; guitarists of the local White Power movement, guitar-brashanding anarchist commandos or a brilliant showband which distilled James Brown's choreography, the amplified onslaught of The Yardbirds and the anti-formalist bent of Sun Ra. The MCS were the burch from the Motor City: dubbed most loyally to make it, yet they insisted in pulling the mat out from under themselves with psychotic insolence only surpassed by their competitors, The Stooges.

The story of The MCS has been told in numerous rock history books, usually as a cautionary tale of how not to become famous and well-respected. Until now, the most accurate account was recorded by the members themselves in the oral history of *Print*, *Please Me*, which correctly posits the Five as progenitors of the Dead End Kid movement in rock that would flourish a decade after their own brief lives in 1968. *The Big Bang* (lines, The MCS's career with substantial liner notes by Jenny Gruenberg and guitarist Wayne Kramer). The former notes the deleterious influence of managers (Hello Brother, Martin John Sinclair) and producers (Lou Leland) in his post-rock, pre-Springsteen transitional period. Given the poor judgment which passed for gospel in the Five's camp, one can be marvel at the strength of the musical anamnesis which bridged through the treachery politics and misguided A&R advice surrounding them. Kramer's participation in programming *The Big Bang* guarantees a set devoted to vindicating the musical reputation of The MCS. Beginning with their earliest singles long

available only on French bootleg pressings and working through the three official albums recorded before their demise in the early 70s the set represents the best possible testimonial to the memory of these wayward factory forged high energy sound. Unfortunately it serves to remind that the best MC5 song, 'Blaze To Come' was never properly recorded (although several live versions exist on the series of posthumous MC5 releases issued by the West Coast Total Energy label); its absence will be felt by those familiar with MC5 sets during their Elektra label years. The late Robby Turner's vocal spoke of nothing less than complete visceral involvement in a given song, the twin guitars of Kramer and Fred 'Sonic' Smith still inexorably awing the sound of an assembly line made to howl at top volume.

That most notorious anthem, 'Kick Out The Jams' is here in unsequenced form as are tracks from the group's Atlantic albums (most notably the under-appreciated High Times) and their swansong, a live cut from French TV. Most of these tracks have plenty of heat left on them and are capable of inspiring awe. In the words of their Minister of culture, CJ Crefield: "I leave you a memorial... The MC5!"

RICHARD HENDERSON

Mark Mothersbaugh

The Intrigue Movie Score

CD: *Various* (Varese Sarabande 008843 03)

As a founding member of 70s mongrel rockers Devo most sovereign Mark Mothersbaugh released himself as Boog Boy the big baby with a rubberized head who was then complete andinson. No Devo show was complete without his appearance donned in a plaid shirt with only a fork and a plugged in electric toaster to keep him occupied) squawking his "The Words Get Stuck In My Throat" swanning to the group's suitably deranged accompaniment.

The spirit of Boog Boy was nudging his creator's eel when Mothersbaugh helped put together Devo's *25th Century* collection which deliberately blunted their disco-Hesal backbeat and transformed it into a surreal shopping mall soundtrack. Since then he has released two (debut) instrumental albums and has concentrated on composing soundtracks, the most successful of which is his music for *The Augurs*, the cartoon bubs who could be viewed as the natural de-evolution of his Boog Boy persona.

His score for *The Righteous* sig screen debut with additional music by Jameson Shamir (see him pushing The London Metropolitan Orchestra through various musical hoops) familiar Strauss's Also Sprach Zarathustra and John Williams' *Raiders Of The Lost Ark*, and otherwise. The manic mix of Zappa-Me, orchestral extremes, of Devo aux limbo and Carl Stalling/Raymond Scott influenced capers ringing throughout the soundtrack is perfectly balanced.

EDWIN POURCEY

Conlon Nancarrow

Studies For Player Piano

CD: *Various* (Varese Sarabande 008843 03)

Pondering the situation of the composer in the machine age back in 1933, George Gershwin declared: "The composer has to do every bit of his work himself. Hand work can never be replaced in the composition of music. If music ever became machine-made in that sense, it would cease to be art."

Sixteen years later Conlon Nancarrow born in Arkansas but ended in Mexico following his decision to fight against Franco during the Spanish Civil War, continued work on a body of composition that casts an eerie, light across Gershwin's conclusion. Called *Studies For Player Piano*, they have collectively come to be recognized as a monumental presence in 20th century music. In terms of direct influence upon others, Nancarrow doesn't loom large. But George Liget's conversion to complex rhythmic multi-layering reflected his exposure to the Studies and Harrison Birtwistle undoubtedly drew upon Nancarrow when composing layered sequences for his opera *The Most Of Orpheus*, intended to evoke "a mad mechanical percussion instrument". But as recordings of the Studies have become generally available – initially courtesy of Tom Becker's invaluable 1750 Arch Records, then on the Wergo CDs collected here – Nancarrow has surely exercised a far broader, if less tangible influence upon contemporary music. Today, his ingenuity and singularity of vision and the enormous dedication of energy required to realise his unique music, appear nothing short of heroic. Nancarrow's glorious obsession transformed the piano player from an Edwardian parlor novelty into a credible vehicle for his art. Or, if you will, he has written a study for the instrument in 1933, but his interest was tempered by the demands of a high public profile. In his obscure isolation, Nancarrow addressed the player piano's potential with monomaniacal intensity.

The resulting music may beat the stamp of the machine age, but the process of producing the actual piano rolls was immensely onerous. The team taken up puncturing each hole by hand was usually in excess of the finished piece's actual playing time. Gershwin would surely have recognised that the necessary "hand work" restored a craft ethos quite alien to the world of Henry Ford and Scientific Management.

The Wergo recordings, made from Nancarrow's own piano player in Mexico City, have appeared before in five separate volumes. Individually they received copious praise from reviewers, and won prestigious awards that signalled the growth of Nancarrow's reputation at the start of the 1990s. Collectively, their impact is overwhelming. Statistically, the music ranges from an ecstatic Boogie-Woogie Suite to an elegantly sparse *Alcotac Canon*. At times it sounds grow immediately dense, very often the playing is superhumanly rapid. Nonetheless, the

music has none of that cold remoteness which often arises when similar effects are generated by electronic means.

JULIAN COMFET

The Necks

Hanging Gardens

CD: *Various* (Varese Sarabande 008843 03)

Australian cult trio The Necks' latest album exerts its powers in subtle ways. Consisting of a single, barely wavering track lasting a shade over an hour, the music likes the listener on a journey that is as much his or her own making as that of the musicians. The album results in a fully defined Low-key jazz fusion imbued with an eerie spatial component? Cross-eyed Ambient fallout with a wistful trace memory of spirituality? It's your guess.

A low hard fact: The Necks are a keyboard-drums-trio from the world – both jointly and individually – has earned them sessions with the likes of Peter Brothman and Bradford Marsala's *Hanging Gardens*, their seventh album is the sequel to 50's *Piano Drums* which was named Australia's jazz record of the year. But rather than lifting out traditional subdivisions, rhythm and role loads, The Necks operate as three engines in tandem: Tony Buck's relentless percussion, Chris Abram's Rhodes piano providing death charge effects and Lloyd Swanton's fuzzed-up rocket bass. Structured around a simple percolating riff that bubbles through to the piece's end, it certainly requires patience, for its musical text only slowly reveals itself en route to its finale where, reduced to developments of the riff, the piece becomes a series of one-track outtakes suspended in ether. A spooked, spacy exuding to an intriguing album.

LOUISE GRAY

New York Art Quartet

35th Reunion

CD: *Various* (Varese Sarabande 008843 03)

Founded by alto saxophonist John Tchicai and trombonist Roswell Rudd, The New York Art Quartet was an influential radical free jazz group which spread the ideas of Albert Ayler and the New Thing. After a succession of bassists, Reggie Workman took the position and percussionist Halford Gravies soon became a key member. Tchicai later said that as the first genuinely free drummer, Gravies made the group's approach possible. The Quartet produced two albums, including ESP's *The New York Art Quartet* which is included in the Dutch Caliber label's ESP music programme (see *Boomerang*). That album also featured poet and writer LeRoi Jones (later Amiri Baraka), who turns up at their 1999 reunion.

In Devised, Roswell Rudd brought the warm, vocalised tones of early jazz to his work in the early 60s with such musicians as Archie Shepp and Bill Dixon. John Tchicai had been with Shepp in *The New York*

soundcheck

Contemporary Free and in 1965 he took part in Coltrane's Ascension and Ayler's *New York Eye And Ear Control*. During the 80s he convened to honor, which makes for one major difference between 35th Reunion and the NYAQ's 60s recordings, another is the crystal clear sound as opposed to the notorious lo-fi of ESP. Although the members are now in or approaching their sixties it's hard to detect any loss of power or facility.

"A Hearing Of Remarkable Journeys" is incandescent from the opening sheets, presumably Armin Bakula's. Here's one element in the sound mess, but his voice soon becomes problematic. He enters midway through the 14 minute "Reverie", repeating "What use is poetry?" No comment. "Lunes Del Indio" mercifully the first of four tracks without Bakula, is a brilliant dirge with a majestic theme: "V.G. Birthday Jamboree" begins as a ghostly march, irrationally led by Tchicai's bucolic humor, but passes through a bewildering variety of moods. "Wing Cigar" opens as a showcase for Graves' "Percussive Passaway" is a ecstatic collective improvisation with Tchicai's gorgeous hollowed tone prominent. This is jazz reinvisioned in the best sense: a few jewel of an album.

ANDY HANLEY

Will Oldham

Guapo/ero/Lost Blues Vol 2

CD: *Various* (Varese Sarabande 008843 03)

Following up *Lost Blues*, Guapo/ero is a further collection of singles, B-sides, live sessions and oddities from the Oldham/Palace back catalogue. The open "Drinking Woman" backed Palace's debut single, while "Stable WHI" and "For The Melons" were issued on a live 7". It's a good way to sample Oldham in shapeshifting form, dueling in and out of focus between associations of rugged backwoods ballads, needly paeans to Neil Young, wry, nested indie tales on folk, and on a couple of tracks where guitars are chopped off synthesizers, a less successful glossy pop dirge. The emphasis is generally on the slow gait of Oldham's acoustic guitar, and sometimes convincing, sometimes annoyingly overplayed guitar driveline.

Because Oldham came into music from acting some crass clichés his pastiche-Apocalypse personae render the music inauthentic. I don't see that as a problem. Both Dylan and The Band, two of the many reference points for Oldham, were at their best when they most invented themselves. Rather, mining the same faded, world-weary seam between folk, rock and indie experiment, this many collaborations include players from Sire, Tortoise, Royal Trux and The Dandy Thieves. Oldham's atmospheres sometimes get too mangled in the crosscurrents. Lacking in a clear enough mythology of his own, his songs rely on inference, rather than direct statement. "Every Mother's Son" is atmospheric enough, taking of music from "Knocking On Heaven's Door", but sung in



Jah Wobble

Jah Wobble & The Invaders Of The Heart

Full Moon Over The Shopping Mall

30 Hertz 30H2010 CD

The latest musical odyssey of Jah Wobble arrives with a characteristic lack of explanation just a track listing, a line up and some sleeve notes from the man credited with Crean pipes, flute, shakuhachi and goathorns. We contributor Clive Bell, Plus a CD with some of the most compelling music you could wish to hear.

"The Master Wobble sets an example of perfect creative focus and freedom," writes Bell, "and laughs at his followers: His laugh says, see, it's easy you tossers, and we bite our lips and noddoe our concentration."

He is, of course, "Jah Wobble would like it to be known that in reality he is not a master. In fact, he hardly knows anything at all," runs the self-deprecating explanatory line on the back cover, just in case you should have missed Bell's heavy doses of humour. And yet, while Wobble and the musicians he has gathered together for this excursion are obviously capable of laughter, it is evidently as a release from the intensity of their approach to the music contained here.

There's something all too perfect about the Wobble myth: The streetwise Stegney Dodger who borrowed a bass from Sid Vicious and did what Vicious could never quite manage (he actually learned to play it); the shambolic amateur giving way to the limitless vistas of the purely instinctive.

With Keith Levene and John Lydon in P.L. Wobble

rerouted dub into the desolate landscape of Anglo ambience. He was the Eno of Public Image, seemingly emblematic rather than essential, despite the solidity of his rolling basslines. Yet the post-Wobble PiL descended into self-parody at roughly the same rate as the post-Eno Roxy, while Wobble's stature, like Eno's, seems only to have increased with the passing of time.

Throughout his career Wobble has had the luxury of picking his collaborators. *Full Moon Over The Shopping Mall* features the same core musicians as last year's *Deep Space*. The combination of Wobble and ex-Can drummer Jello Lipezel always seemed like the avarc rock fantasy rhythm section and once again they lock together into a single unit, bound by a hypnotic sense of timing. The title track sets their niggling rhythms centre stage, as newcomer Balus Shmivast's star counterparts the unearthly howling of Bell's Crean pipes and Jean-Pierre Raskin's honking cimbalom. There's a sense of magic and exoticism but also of brooding violence in the brutal simplicity of Wobble's bass, which surfaces and resurfaces through the dueling harmonies of East and West.

Considering the instrumentation at work, it is remarkable how urban this opener sounds. Perhaps it's the autogression of the title, but "Full Moon Over The Shopping Mall" locates its mysticism in a particularly modern context. This, however, is only a departure point as the throb of traffic and the scream of sirens are left behind in "Ethos", with Wobble's bass, diving deeper in the mix, below the entrancing innovations of Shmivast's multi-tracked, wordless vocals, and Lipezel's contribution reduced to providing a perfectly placed counterpart to the same player's tables.

"Waking Moon" continues the increasing Eastward drift, with Wobble and Lipezel providing a driving pulse that can be felt but scarcely heard. "Waking Moon", gives the pipes primordial prominence, beginning with a solo of naked, primitive beauty. "Acting The Goat", beginning with gorgeous stereo goathorns from Bell, brings the rhythm section roaring back into prominence, building a glorious escophony around their insistent sense of accelerated motion.

Looking again at Bell's sleeve notes ("The target is not the audience, but the communal state of enlightenment that listeners and musicians may reach together at any moment, maybe between the drawing of two breaths"), suddenly they don't seem so much of a joke.

BOB WATSON

Nel Young's last needly voice with links seemingly free associated out of old rock songs, against a piano and two idly strumming and plucking guitars. But what works aurally on one track can seem anaemic on another. Then again, his eclecticism allows him to pack some surprises, such as the strange cuttof to "Gesundheit", which seems to plunder and disarrange fragments of the Twin Peaks theme, or "I Got Big Balls", which boasts about just that, while staying within the frame of a Joan Baez torch song.

PATTI PITTICK

Pan American

100 Brummers/360 Byphasse
AUST-FIRST 8891613 CD

Like its predecessor, the second solo solo project by Labrador's Hank Nelson repeatedly processes experimental sounds with Impud groove until the music finally emerges from its murky beginnings in a state of crazy "Steel Star"; for example, opens with a muted bass thud and a muffled keyboard melody which is offset by a piercing, undulating drone. Gradually a luscious smooth

runk materialises from these semi-abstract elements, running on a minimalist sound loop. *K. Lammate* similarly merges sounds in a three-way exchange between machine noise, keyboard melody and ubiquitous pulse beats.

What distinguishes this release from his solo debut is his choice of collaborators: Mimi Parker and Al Sourak of Hawk's Law detective harmonies in the bass-heavy ambience of "Code", and Chicagoan trumpeter Rob Mazurek features on "Double Rail" and "Both Ends Fired". He contributes a buoyy ironon solo and drawn-out quivering notes to the former, and a more

conventional fusion part to the latter. Indeed, the combination of his trumpet and project leader Nelson's fluid runs on a Fender Rhodes piano sometimes brings the album close to generic fusion, but even these passages are tempered by the more rigid formal constraints of the electronica elements at their base.

TOM RODGE

Bernard Parmegiani

Pop/electroic
PLATE LUNCH PL02 CD

Born in 1927, Bernard Parmegiani had little formal musical tuition and originally trained and worked as a sound engineer. But in his dedication to electroacoustic music, he combines an improviser's intuition with a composer's sense of form. Unfortunately, only a fraction of Parmegiani's output has been recorded. His highly structured *De Natura Sonorum* from 1975 appeared last year on INA. However, none of the tracks here quite approaches that master piece of electronic abstraction. *At April* (1973) comes closest, even though it features a real-time instrument in Michel Portal's baritone. The track opens with a gauzy, tango-like backdrop to Portal's huffing and sputtering. The bassline is treated so that it eventually comes across as a choir merging harmonies with the electronic sounds.

The other three tracks, from 1966-69 are more clearly in the *musique concrète* tradition. *Du Pas A L'Anie* is a collage of pop and symphonic sounds, but Parmegiani avoids — or simply lacks the resources to adopt — the moreist approach of planeteers. His extracts are longer and often ready identifiable, with quotes from Stravinsky's *The Rite Of Spring*, Messiaen's *Quatuor For The End Of Time* and Beethoven's set against jazz and Latin music and snippets of spoken voice and radio announcements. *Poplectrice* is an "electroacoustic divertissement", which mixes natural and synthetic sounds with a prominent role for Marrow's sweeping strings, and pop samples. *Jazzov* (1968) has the least enduring impact. A running electroacoustic tape accompanies a group of French jazz musicians, but the live music is unspired and the recording very body — then again, most of these recordings are showing signs of age. But this is a much-needed collection from an important period of a neglected master.

ANDY HAMILTON

Jean-François Pauvros & Keiji Haino

Y
SHAMBALA 990051 CD

Michel Bulteau

Surpulse
FRACTAL 008 CD

Jean-François Pauvros is an unlikely-looking guitar hero, but since the end of the 70s his participation in semi-legendary French groups

such as Gong and Catalogue, plus his occasional music for film and dance, have earned him something resembling cult status in France. As an improviser coming primarily from rock, parallels could be drawn with Fred Frith. Certainly his work with former infants temble Jac Berrocal in Catalogue is arguably as powerful as Frith's short-lived duo Massacre. But while the British avant-guitarist's discography has long passed the hundred mark, Pauvros has released a mere handful of hard-to-find albums on labels such as Spektral and Neko, as well as his record Moreau Rouge, with Makoto Saito and Pauvros' now-relic legend Jean-Henri Foucault.

Last year he recorded some gigs with Gérald Hano, including one on the Battor, a magnetically converted lightship moored permanently on the Seine in front of Dominique Perrault's giant, impersonal National Library. The music captured that memorable evening's strategies against architecture, anyone? — features on it, and it's what John Peel used to call a "downhome traditional barn fry". Pauvros matches Hano's song for being in a truly ecstatic mood of mind. It's only marred by the inclusion (Pauvros's idea?) of Gong veteran François Causse on drums, who is way out of his depth and woefully unable to compete in terms of sheer stamina. Shame. Tony Williams wasn't available. Even so, it's a landmark album for Pauvros and a valuable addition to the vast Hano discography.

Pauvros's other sparring partners over the years have included figures as diverse as Rhys Chatham, Wim Mertens, Arto Lindsay, Eileen Parker and ex-Modern Lover Emilio Brooks. On 1993's *Musique Pour Anne Dreyfus*, Bassel Brodes again plays alongside Pauvros on *Anguier*, the latest offering from an artist even less prolific than the guitarist — singer/writer Jimi Madié Bubuak. After two mythic albums with his group Hanagami (Iran), Bubuak settled in New York and befriended the likes of William Burroughs, Alan Vega, Pat Sims and Lou Reed, whose prowess imbued his work with an authentic sense of urban apocalypse. No Wave, goth, cross-pollinated with Antonin Artaud-like violence. Reed, he can actually read drum well, and Pauvros is content to undergo his extraordinary tests with disbelief that chillingly sensual harmonic substrata on his trademark bowed guitar. To quote Anne: "The inner ear is an ergonomic zone without limit" and what the assembled company get up to here proves him right.

SAM WARMUTH

The Residents

Refused. The Pigmidge Of Santa Dog Through The Second Millennium. R&B AMERICA RRI2121

Santa Dog was The Residents' first record, which they released as a Christmas card in 1972 under the separate names of Ivory and The Brainwavers. Delta Nudes. The College

Workers and Art And Omega featuring The Singing Lawn Chairs. Pressed up in an edition of 400 copies, their debut comprised four songs on two 7" singles, packaged in an elaborately hand-printed and varnished gatefold sleeve. Unfortunately many copies of the sleeve stuck together — forcing owners to rip it to shreds to get at the music inside and few intact originals survive today. The Residents mailed a copy to their hero Frank Zappa (who never replied) and then President Richard Nixon, whose aides returned his copy unopened after first stamping REFUSED on the package. The Residents shrugged their shoulders and started work on their second album *Meet The Residents*. The bones of Santa Dog, meanwhile, were temporarily shelved.

Further variations on the Santa Dog theme were released by the group in 1978, 1988, 1992 and (this version) 1999, for which an extra four apoplectic songs have been added, together with a **9**th reissue of the original release's "fire", to mark their genre creation's entry into the third Christian millennium.

Refused brings the entire Santa Dog saga up to date by rounding them all up, including the unreleased 1984 version, on one disc. But the original still sits deepest. This dark plunge into The Residents' primal creative juices sounds totally fresh, even as it looks back with real human emotion. The inside order given out by Art And Omega on "Artistic Damage" to "Kid o' cat" may sound infected with traces of Phony Python humour, but any silliness is quickly quashed, as the song evolves into a duality statement, worty of Kurt Schwitters. No wonder many of the recipients of that first Santa Dog shuddered in disbelief and threw it out.

More than two decades later, The Residents themselves are still trying to shake this paricular hellbound from their trail. Yet they find themselves irresistibly drawn towards its secret power.

EDWIN POUNCEY

Janek Schaefer

Out

ic.pink.kid.4101.10

With music that really articulates a sense of environmental space, it's no surprise to learn that Janek Schaefer is an architect. He's one of a number of turntablists to leave the less and lefties of Hip Hop behind and reconnected to an earlier musical concrete tradition. A focused groove collaboration with fellow turnmeister Philip Jack is forthcoming.

According to his bio, for half this 60-minute disc, "Construction Five" opens with piano crackles and the sounds of rocks crashing in tectonic readjustment, before wind chimes suggest the blackness of some subterranean void. Radio signals and an unhappy choir get the mix at a reanimated salsa's pace, before transforming into the sounds of night insects. "Construction Five" takes things into outer space, with a liberal salting of 50s electronic bleeps and whistles added to the vinyl loops

and guitars. Schaefer's careful organic approach to the slowly evolving material ensures that it's never too far away from the sort of trippy lo-fi/electroacoustic bawdiness of the '70s. Nonetheless, the rhythmic stuck grooves and occasionally galactic noise reconnect to more recent filthiness and experimental sampling genres. If towards the end it occasionally gets a little overwrought, Schaefer generally deserves congratulation for his admirable sense of sonic architecture.

BRIAN DUGUID

Alexander Von Schlippenbach & Tony Oxley

Digger's Harvest

RPH 101 CD

Schlippenbach Trio

Complete Combination

RPH 105 CD

Digger's Harvest is most immediately the magnificent sound of technique energised as the surge of the evert loci into Oxley and Schlippenbach's awesome musical resources. The event was the Total Music Meeting held at Berlin's Postweiher in November 1996. Percussionist and pianist, both born in 1938, grapple tenuously with muscle and imagination. Schlippenbach's powerful churning and fractured bass figures feed right-hand elaborations studded unmistakably in ancestral jazz memories, but with diminished accents. Cecid Taylor's tattered drummer Tony Oxley is further out, more abstract, less allusive, yet every bit as physical and unerringly inventive. His lashing and irregular punctuation consistently modifies and adds further complexity to Schlippenbach's densely clustered phrases and dissonant lines. Two extended pieces frame four more restrained ones, allowing plenty of variation overall in terms of pace and intensity.

The cover for Digger's Harvest is a painting by Oxley in his wet contrabass, concentrations of activity and explosively coloured transfigurations of biomorphic forms suggest parallels with his percussion work. Paul Lovens did the cover of Complete Combination, a diagram of a deconstructed engine which is illuminating when compared to its functionally precise drumming with the Schlippenbach trio. Lovers is a punchy player, busy yet attentive, and never flashy. His understated, contemplative band fit more wobbly patterns. Schlippenbach on piano and Eileen Parker on tenor and soprano saxophone, with a string of shrewdly placed percussive knots.

This trio first recorded for IMP in 1972. The fire that took hold on their debut, *Polarstar*, was unsmashed and more tightly channelled on the set, recorded in Berlin in April 1998. Lovens is distinctly sustaining on the 44 minute title piece, subtly curving and shaping during the CD's remaining suite, the

30 minute "Fuels 1-7". Parker and Schlippenbach give signature performances throughout, recognisably themselves at every turn, yet never formulaic or detrimental to the trio's identity. If the term live jazz still has any currency, it's down to vibrantly charged and inventive recordings like these.

JULIAN COWLEY

Soft Machine

Nouvette

CD/CDR/1001.100.100

Soft Machine's classic double album *Third* (CBS 1970) signalled a new jazz rock direction for this legendary British group. Robert Wyatt's vocal on "Injun In" was a final reminder that the Softs had formerly been purveyors of witty, whimsical, sometimes surreal Progressive rock music. Even this early jazz rock phase is preserved on *Nouvette*, a previously unreleased live recording from Fairlight Hall, Croydon on 4 January 1970, the first full length disc to feature the short-lived (just two months) quartet of Elon Dean, Hugh Hooper, Peter Ratledge, Robert Wyatt and Lyn Dobson (herself the remnant of a short-lived septet). The presence of the lesser known Dobson (soprano sax and flute), makes *Nouvette* an aficionado's must-have. He was ideally suited to the Softs' eclectic needs, supplying the type of versatile musician who was equally at home in the jazz, R&B and rock contexts that emerged in the late '60s.

Nouvette is a reminder of the power of Soft Machine live at full-throttle: the polyrhythmic drumming of Wyatt during the sheets-of-sound mesh of Hooper's supercharged, often "fuzzed" bass guitar or Ratledge's swinging, splintered organ textures. On top of this, the Dean-Dobson sax attack makes "Mousetrap", "Nosebleed", "Backwater", "Mousetrap (Reprise)" and "Hiroo, Arrerone And Bear" (all neatly sequenced) a thrilling 20 minutes. Dobson plays a surprisingly gritty flute solo over wah-wah organ on "Backwater", while Dean's frenzied alto peals on "1218" a brash Hooper tune making its first disc appearance.

CHRIS BLACKERBY

Sun Ra & His Solar Myth Arkestra

Life Is Splendid

TOTAL ENERGY HER026 CD

Sun Ra & His Intergalactic Arkestra

Outer Space Employment Agency

TOTAL ENERGY HER021 CD

Two performances recorded at Michigan's Ann Arbor Blues & Jazz Festival in 1972 and '73 respectively, here released on CD for the first time, and each containing one of the wildest music committed to tape by Sun Ra and his ineradicable band of offworld guests. Looking back, 1972 seems to have been a

Various Artists

Jazzacutel

CHARLY NEU1373 3XCD

This elegantly boxed triple CD, subtitled "a collection of avant garde/free jazz/psychedelia from the BYG/Actuel catalogue of 1969-1971", is the result of Sonic Youth guitarist Thurston Moore and writer Byron Coley's combined interest and obsession with that important 60s French jazz label, and serves as an instant primer to the 52 albums it eventually released. In fact, eight of these (Don Cherry's *My First Pan/Second Part*, Archie Shepp's *Bliss/Live At Pan-African Festival*, Art Ensemble Of Chicago's *A Jackson In Your House/Message To Our Folks*, and Sun Ra's *Solar Myth Approach Vols 1 & 2*) have been released simultaneously on four separate CDs.

More than just a random collection of tracks taken from a set of slightly warped vinyl curios, however, *Jazzacutel* has a tale to tell which further illuminates Val Wilmer's recently republished history of the 60s free jazz movement *As Serious As Your Life*. Those involved include a host of legendary US free jazz icons such as Sunny Murray, Archie Shepp, Sun Ra and Anthony Braxton (to name a few); lesser known (but equally important) players like Sonny and Linda Sharrock, Clifford Thornton, Graham Moncur III, Frank Wright, Arthur Jones, Jimmy Lyons and Alan Silva; together with a select gathering of European jazz artists, avant garde musicians and underground rock acts whose individual styles echoed the revolutionary changes which were taking place in world politics and the arts at that crucial time.

In 1968 few free jazz musicians in America could find either a record company, or an audience who would listen to them. Despite the gentle encouragement of such rock venues as Bill Graham's East and West Coast Fillmore dancehalls, Chet Helms's Family Dog and Russ Gibbs's Grande Ballroom in Detroit, which occasionally featured jazz names like Miles Davis, Thelonious Monk, Roshaan Roland Kirk, Cecil Taylor and Sun Ra as headliner or support, the free jazz movement was largely ignored or unheard of. This response resulted in a mass exodus of US free jazz players to Europe, many ending up in Paris, which had then become the centre for jazz and avant garde music. In Europe during the late 60s the 'new music' had taken root and bloomed to produce a dazzling series of fabled live gigs and recording sessions, some of which were caught and documented by labels like Sun, Shandar, Palm, American tenor saxophone player Frank Wright's partly owned Center Of The World and, more prominently, BYG/Actuel.

Taking its name from the initials of its three founders Fernand Bourou (who left shortly afterwards to pursue other activities), Jean-Luc Young and Jean Georgakarakis, BYG started out by reissuing select titles from US jazz label Savoy. One day Young and

Steve Lacy (left), Don Cherry and long haired friend



Karakos were introduced to jazz drummer Claude Debéo, who also edited the avant garde journal *Actuel*, and between them they decided to form a joint label which would capture the raw energy of free jazz while it was still fresh and vital. Debéo's passion for the music put him in contact with some of the major figures of the genre including The Art Ensemble Of Chicago and Archie Shepp, who was persuaded to come to Paris by *Actuel* photographer Jacques Bercy. While on assignment to cover the Pan-African festival in Algiers, Other free spirits followed, and in the month of August 1969 a mammoth recording session was organised, where the small army of musicians who had descended on Paris would turn up with their instruments to play and interact with each other; while Young and his associates recorded the proceedings for posterity.

It is from this wealth of material that the present compilers have drawn to fill up their *Jazzacutel* box. This is a labour of love which must also have seemed daunting due to the sheer volume of great music that was made available to them. Disc One immediately pushes the listener in at the deep end and holds their head under with a thrilling blast of unshackled Improv from a sextet led by former Albert Ayler and Cecil Taylor drummer Sunny Murray. Urged on by Murray's pledging skin-thrashing, roaring nucleus of 'Red Cross' blues from Arthur Jones, Roscoe Mitchell and Kenneth Terada's combined alto and tenor horn bombardment which dips, dives and intensifies towards a vein popping climax. In direct contrast to Murray's high energy outburst is fellow drummer Robert Wyatt's exquisitely laidback playing and vocal on a version of the Soft Machine standard 'Memories' (recorded in London) where he is accompanied by Bananaman with Gong leader and former Soits guitarist David Allen at the helm. This song's inclusion (together with contributions elsewhere from French

avant garde unit Acting Trio, electronic ensemble MEV and a later psychedelic slice from Gong's *Commebert Ecquevière* period) illustrates the label's grand diversity, where no creative pebble, regardless of colour, shape or size, was unturned.

The voices of black sisterhood were also loud enough to be heard over the barrage of screaming sex. Hearing Jeanne Lee coolly deliver the line, "You who shot your spear into me, but never set me free", on Archie Shepp's great 'Blax' is a beautifully defiant, toodic whistling moment that is firmly bonded to the tradition of jazzrock. In a more abstract form, so is Linda Sharrock's primal scream accompaniment to her husband Sonny's fanning guitar solo on 'Soon'. Her impassioned howling invites comparison with early Yoko Ono, but the flow of rage, pain, sorrow and love which she weaves throughout her performance belongs to her alone. Both Lee and Sharrock effectively make their mark here, and clearly show that there was also a niche for women to express themselves in the seemingly male dominated free jazz movement.

The highlight of the box, however, is the final track, which relays side six of *The Sessions*, bass player Alan Silva and his Celestial Communication Orchestra's big band extravaganza which was originally released as a triple album. Featuring a galaxy of global free jazz stars, Silva's towering creation is a permanent testament to the power and resilience of the new music, and a beacon which illuminates what the entire month long recording session (togethers with the three day festival at Amouage which followed it) was all about. Playing music and embracing freedom were two obviously important aspects, but so was the human factor. The deep humanity, originality and brilliance that shines through these painstakingly restored recordings proves that the BYG/Actuel experiment was an unparalleled success.

EDWIN POUNCEY

particularly intense year for Ra and The Arkestra. Temporarily based in California and with the assistance of director John Conej, Ra had begun shooting the scenes that would eventually be assembled into the extraordinary *Sierra Is The Place*, a movie described by biographer John F. Szwed as "part documentary, part science fiction, part blaxploitation, part revisionist biblical epic". The film and its soundtrack would provide much of the musical and philosophical grounding for The Arkestra's performances over the next couple of years, including the two documented here. The same year Ra signed a contract with ABC/Paramount to resuscitate the already labyrinthine Saturn back catalogue and record a raft of new music (the deal would later go sour, but not before Ra had produced four new albums and *Impulse!* had re-released around ten Saturn titles). In addition and while maintaining a weekly residency at New York's notorious Skully's Saloon, The Arkestra had started to receive bookings from high profile US venues, including Newport and John Sinclair's Ann Arbor beatfests, where they played to audiences of up to 15,000 and shared the bill with Junior Walker & The All Stars, Howlin' Wolf and Dog Taylor.

The performances on both these CDs seem to reflect this overarching mood of good times a'comin' – the music progresses with such dazzling exuberance you want to scream right along with the fucking life-affirming joy of it all.

Each CD contains in microcosm the elements that defined the Arkestra's repertoire of the period: debonair gospel melodies and snappy salsas for the space age courtesy of June Tyson and The Space Ethic Voices, withering solo Hoosi and organ passages, sanctified sax from John Gilmore and Marshall Allen, hair-raising percussion jams that move forward with the hurricane force of a hydro-headed dervish, laying waste to everything in its path – all segued into an experience custom-made to expand and liberate dual, earthbound senses.

In his sleeplessness John Sinclair revels in the memory of the atmosphere of these shows, recounting them as mind-blowing multimedia spectacles characterised by "brightly coloured costumes, leaping dancers, exotic percussion choirs and space vocal chorales... a spindly-tastiness of sound and light the likes of which had never been seen or heard before". The light might have gone out on Ra, but the sound remains – glorious and undimmed.

TONY HERRINGTON

U-cef

Halabum

APARTMENT 22 001 CD

"I got the feeling in London more than anywhere else of being noticed as a musician who naturally needs to be with other musicians to create the notes," writes U-cef

aka Youself Adel, in his own sleeve-note commentary to the track "Hula Monk". "It's unfortunate that a lot of people just work from a home-based studio by themselves." The track itself is a very effective jazzy dub mix of Moroccan tunes.

U-cef's streets-telling Hip Hop persona might be very West London, but he was born in the Moroccan capital Rabat. What powers his album is this tension between the high-tech loneliness of the Western producer and the richly communal street music of North Africa. U-cef's own sense of exile propels him to lose Berber, Gnawa and Andalusian traditions with the jungle dub and Hop Hop he loves and breathes in England. The result is new, imaginative and clearly a project from the heart. U-cef's fascination with the wide variety of music he encounters in Morocco is apparent. He is eager to distinguish his music from what he calls the "18-3D exotic bullshit chipping up the circuit", but as a producer he has a light touch that keeps him free from the over-earnsed, frowny bough. At times he need to force his point, like the closing "Guasac" on which a rhythmically flexible Gnawa musician is forcedly primed down to fit a dull London beat, but there are plenty of inspired moments, too, like the toppling bass and charting Ahouache women on "Tagaouz".

CLIVE BELL

Frances-Marie Uitti & Mark Dresser

Sonoreando

CD (Klangraum/HOME RECORDS)

"A compendium of the art of the duo" is how Elliott Sharp's sleeve notes describe this album recorded in 1996 and 1997 by cellist Uitti and bassist Dresser. But it defies any expectations you might hold for their instrumental combination – this pair achieves an almost orchestral range of sonorities without any electronic treatment. As Sharp also notes, the music conundruses us partly because of the players' versatility in extended techniques. Although the album forms a kind of suite of seven pieces, each track undergoes a mysterious phase. Their improvisation is fluid, evanescent and elusive.

At best, describing each track can only give a flavour of the music found there. But some landmarks can be discerned amid the constant, absorbing transformations. The opening site track begins as a soundscape, but Ambient tendencies are soon swallowed up in a tone of increasing urgency. "Grat" initially has a percussive base, undergirding the most conventionally melodic approach of any track, while Uitti's cello is melodic and vibrato laden. But the mood subsides in the music's fragments into dark, resonant areas.

"La Finestra" has some of the most remarkable effects, with high-pitched pluckings turning into guitar-like strumming. It's hard to tell which instrument is doing what, given their often extreme registers. But

then it's often hard to tell the instruments apart as sounds converge and diverge seamlessly. "Morabat" opens with a seesawing, wheeling motor, with a suggestion of tango. Unusually propulsive, it rises to a pitch of intensity equalled only by the turbulence at the close of "La Finestra". There's warmth and beauty in these remarkable performances, but you have to listen a few times to notice.

ANDY HAMILTON

Volcano The Bear

The Inuzzes Decline

CD (Klangraum/HOME RECORDS)

A shock eruption from the almost extinct UK rock underground, Volcano The Bear's lava is sourced from both the magma of mid-70s rock-in-exile and the smog of 19th century Enclosed Roads Industrialism. These seemingly incompatible substances merge in the crucible heart of VTB's levered invention. Their prologue of chub electric strapping and hankering synths gives way to guitars and scything guitars, which are in turn dissolved by a thumpingly physical drum cassette, and so on through a blackened tunnel lined with weird, glowing instruments and scintillating songs.

With their wacky name, wily oblique album title and label choice (Klang Wih Wounds), a still evidently winning trend doesn't stop VTB's agenda. And singing nonsense in a quavering English falsetto just as no one will mistakenly think they mean it, man is decidedly backhanded thinking for anyone who is not Robert Wyatt or Charles Hayward. But in heavily staccatoed oddments themselves, they run out to be consummate provincial hustlers who cheekily run away with the pickpot.

DBIA KOFF

Susumu Yokota

Magic Thread

CD (Klangraum/HOME RECORDS)

"Somewhere in the process of evolution the spinning and weaving of thread became possible for humankind," writes Susumu Yokota in this first English release of his 1988 CD *Magic Thread*. "How did this come to pass?" And the answer is... not much help really in getting a handle on the extraordinary yet evocative weird of his *Fluxus* electronics.

Since he evacuated Aoi Jazz Ambient and all the other salerooms along the Tokyo-London-Detroit-Chicago axis, his music has gone into hibernation and ended up in a world nine months before the season. He's a now producing nascents forms whose future shapes are contained in single-timed cells floating dreamily in amniotic fluid, even as they unknowingly gravitate towards each other in rhythmic strings of life. The most compelling pieces here pick up on and amplify those strings' muffled pulses. Reflux

is a simple yet tremendous hearing rhythm rising from a swoon of electronic near-silence. Four tracks later on "Pompa" that same silence has evolved into a more complex creature, taking hints that inquisitively reach out and punch keys or pluck at guitars. On "Sotto", the music buzzes with static, and inolerance, an ecstasy of communication. Still nine months before the disco disillusion has not yet ticked in.

INNA KOFF

Otomo Yoshihide

Cathode

CD (Klangraum/HOME RECORDS)

The four tracks on Cathode see Yoshihide's avant-garde Otomo moving in yet another new direction this time incorporating traditional Japanese instruments. There is, of course, a tradition of this kind of thing. From the mid-60s onwards, experimental composers like Toru Takemoto and Toshi Ichiyanagi increasingly incorporated gagaku ensembles (bass and shakuhachi) into their music. That trend mirrored comparable rediscoveries and mutations of the tradition in other arts – a re-econ of the century-old idea that modernism had to eschew Westernism. But while Takemoto's Otomo notes in the sleeve notes that the colours of "Cathode #1" are inspired by the composer's film music was often accused of mere eclecticism for his use of traditional instruments, Yoshihide succeeds in reinventing them in an electronic context.

Most impressive are "Modulation #1" and "Modulation #2", recorded in real-time with no overdubbing or editing. Both pieces exploit the uncanny resonances between the high-pitched tones of a siren-like generator (played by Sachiko M) and the sputter of mouth organ used in gagaku. "Modulation #2" adds a slowly unwinding figure picked out on acoustic guitar by Tatsuo Inouhe and some subtle electronic flutters that bring to mind Jim O'Rourke's Happy Days piece for guitar and hand-drums. Where the interest really lies, though, is in the modulating tones between sputters and who. There subtle pulsing which varies according to the listener's position in relation to the speakers and the environment is disorienting yet gorgeous to behold. The simplicity of the conception in no way detracts from the emotional effect.

The two "Cathode" pieces feature a larger ensemble including the deeply-toned *tsuboshamisen* normally used in buraku puppet theatre, violin, cello and contrabass. On "Cathode #1", separate performances from a graphic score were merged into a whole by analogue tape manipulation. The second piece does the same but digitally. However, as unusual as it is to hear the distinctly peacockish *tsuboshamisen* in any sort of avant-garde context, the structure remains frustratingly opaque. A salient strength, nonetheless.

ALAN CUMMING

the boomerang

New reissues: rated on the rebound

last year, the Dutch Calibre label embarked on a wholesale label of the catalogue of Bernard Stolmer's ESP-Disk imprint which, in the mid-60s, effectively became the house label for New York's subterranean free jazz and outsider rock communities (see *The Wire* 157). Now the CDs, which have been remastered (well and repackaged (not so well)), are being made available in the UK, and the first batch includes at least two stone-cold classics of 60s outsider art. When it was released in 1964, **The Albert Ayler Quintet's Spiritual Unity** (10CD) gave voice to a personal vision so occult that it seemed to emerge straight from the Book of Revelations rather than any core bourgeois notions of an avant garde. The combination of Gary Peacock's vengeful basslines, Sunny Murray's strobe-flicker rhythms, and Ayler's heartrending screech, which sounds in tongues both alien and familiar, sounds wholly organic and intuitive, a meeting three-way between hyperintelligent adepts struggling to articulate Ayler's apocalyptic message. By contrast, **Crossroads** (Grogan) (2001 CD) sounds like Frank Zappa's screeching distillation of post-Woodstock communal happy music; it's all play borings in the dirt-mud flesh. The "brandish" of Austin Greinere and Brian Elliott, a pair of dossed-off had NYC songwriters, the record is a ludicrous but endearing mix of tribal peroration, bawling, crackling songforms, stephening lyrics and wavyed of electronics and lapeworks. Ewky wifey, certainly, but as a period piece it takes

some beating. What's more, today you can stack it alongside such similarly divided records as *Fluxus*, *One Bond* and *Radio Ethiopia* as a template for all manner of current underground rock, from Pelt to Richard Youngs and beyond.

If you can't wait around for Calore to reissue **The Albert Ayler Quintet's** ESP release *Stax Station*, May 1965, the Italian Cramps label has recently released it in a 10CD gramme vinyl edition (GET101B LP). The record features one of Ayler's least documented groups, a quartet featuring brother Donay on trumpet, bassist Lewis Wornell, the young Ron (Ronald) Shannon Jackson on drums, and violinist Michael Sempore a Paganini for the Village Vanguard set. The recording is booy or best, and Wornell hardly figures in the mix, but the antique sound suits the quality of the music, which is simultaneously sepiated and tinted with cosmic dust. Typically, the songs lift off from a dusty repertoire derived from old timey folkloric Baptist spirituals and New Orleans funeral dirges, but they are soon blazed into nthano unknown dimensions by the mystery black notes emanating from the Ayler brothers' collective improvisations.

The LP is part of Cramps' ongoing Get Back reissue series, which is making available any number of obscure, raw mismatch documents from the 60s and 70s, all on heavy duty vinyl and packaged in thick, cardboard facsimiles of the original sleeves. The latest batch of releases to make it to the UK include *John Cage* (1976 Cheep Imiston) (GET161-171 LP), a solo piano work of crushing banality/glazed beauty (take it as appropriate).

Derek Bailey's Divino No 2 (GET5202 LP) which contains 14 typically oily electric guitar improvisations recorded in 1976, and best of all, *Alacra Su Schermi* (GET16109 LP), an ultra-rare mid-70s document

of the legendary Italian Improvising collective **Gruppo DI Improvisazione Nuova Comune**. The group had its teeth deep in Europe's post-war avant garde, and included Enrico Rava and Dario Argento's "Drinaggio A Guscio Scelti", on the other hand, is a 16 minute drowser that rises through various levels of intensity and disquiet, beginning with low regular legato trumpe phrases and rumbling bass piano notes which are then strident by high-end brass multiphonics, clanging the initial sounds of alarm before fading back into the humming silence.

In 1977, **Richard Hell & The Voidoids** (Berk Generation) (Self-Warner 7599261 372 CD) was seen as the epitome of big rotten Apple-prancer punk. Hell's literary chapter, and guitars Bob Quine's jazzy palette divided the Sourcerers' a linear out of 1-2-3-4 doo-dooishes or insufferable arch nihilism? 23 years on, it sounds reassuringly nor Hell's Day Husmarr project replete with mandatory NYC vampire tropes ("I'm born like with it"), sounds like a world-carnacle enacted against adult disappointments. "Love Comes In Spots" not seedy-cynical but tender-buzzed, a teen pony nerd's Romance ideals dashed off by night with the Reel. This three chord dialectic gives way to funkoid thrash on a never run through the single of John Fogerty's "Walking On The Water" — a stand out in anyone's bar-band book. **Born Generation** stands up as a song cycle whole — an extended quarrel between rock-as-false versus the terminal considerations (unkn. nihilism) of retreat.

Recorded over three nights in August 1964, **John Fahey's The Dance Of Death And Other Plantation Fancies** (Takoma TA8909 CD) has been remastered with four bonus tracks from the same sessions. Drawing instrumental licks from Dock Boggs, Willie Brown, Bubba White and others, Fahey was beginning to make atmospheric forays away from his blues and Country influences. What emerges are strange, flowing, fusiform melodic pieces in open guitar tunings. The picking is generally steady and tense rather than fancy, but Fahey coaxes a steady lycra from his material, drawing it out into long, hypnotic patterns.

Different transformations of the blues were happening

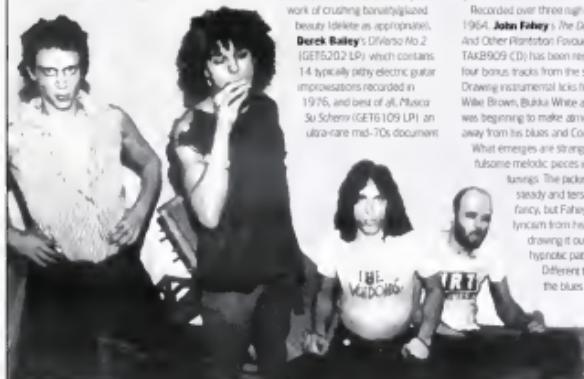
further out West in the mid-60s where copious amounts of mind-altering substances accelerated the morphing of grottoes and jagbands into San Francisco balloon phrasemakers like **Quicksilver Messenger Service**. Their name accurately describes the cabra courtship dances of their two leads, the tremolo-lashed John Copeina and the more reticent Gary Duncan, and their reticulated rhythm section. The splendid *Universe/Lost Gold And Silver* (Collection Choice Music CMC1092 2xCD) draws on an infamous 1968 concert bootleg. *Maden Of The Cancer Moon*, for extended wailouts of Howlin' Wolf's "Smokestack Lightning", *Willie Dacon's "Blackdoor Man"* and their staple, "Who Do You Love?", which captures SP1-LSD mindfuck euphoros far more successfully than their official recordings. The bonus CD of demos and outtakes also has its (less patient) charms.

Recorded between February and April 1979, **Paula** (Der Deutsch-Americaner Kremmelschau) (Platz DAPD 01) finds an early version of **DAF** (without vocals Gabi Delgado-López) retreating to a pub in the forest outside Düsseldorf and creating a racket that's got nothing to do with frenzied, German-American or otherwise. The 22 instruments of their lost debut album — some merely fragments and scribbles — are noisy, apidated squalls of guitar rhythims, slyly electronic, raws feedback and pernent drums that beat and blare in the face of the Marshall Plan.

The trend for reissuing junk records so obscure that the musicians themselves probably never heard them continues apace with the latest curios from San Francisco's *Lun Hug Height Records*. Judging from the sleeve art of *Let The Sun Shine In* (Lun Hug Height LH034 CD), **Sons And Daughters** (OZ) were the house band of Black Panther Party. At their best, on tracks like "A Real Thing", "Darkman Junction" and, believe it or not, "Operation Feed Yourself", the group worked up a electric version of that Weldon Ivins fusion groove. Elsewhere, though, the sub-Abby Lincolnisms and mellow vibes make you remember why no one wears dusters anymore.

Exchanging the back-to-Mexico gear for Technicalcore pomp splendour, *Indekapo's Turner* follow a more traditional funk soul route on *Act 1* (Lun Hug Height LH033 CD). However, there's plenty of weirdness to recommend it, the fantastic mid-70s keyboard intro and subdued wah-wah riff of "Cause I Love You", the singer trying to woo his girl on "Let's Go Fishing" — and yes there's a line about "getting hooked" — the percolating, vaguely Afro-ish groove of "Please The People", the great, underscored break of "Sweetest Thing In The World", and the utterly propulsive "Sound Of The Taungs" — they just don't make 'em like that anymore. (Reviewed by Matt Jythes) **Tony Hennington, David Keenan, Bille Kopf, Ian Penman and Peter Shapero**

Richard Hell & The Voidoids



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in brief

avant rock

Reviewed by Tom Ridge

AMP Studio Alien Registration
Offsite (check CD-R 001) CD

Philosopher's Stone Apparatus
KRAMER (KRAM010) CD

Not to be confused with the AMP collective, AMP Studio is maniac Richard Walker's home recording project. It is distinguished by a more abstract, esoteric feel, where song based structures dissolve into distorted Ambient noise, loops and samples. The edges might be blurred, but a noisy blanket of crackle and hiss ensures the music's gritty surface. Ex-AMP member Gareth McNeill's Philosopher's Stone might have cut loose from Walker, but his second collection of abstract tonal pieces, created by processing and sampling guitar sounds, shares some of AMP Studio's qualities. However, PS's grittiness makes itself felt with the occasional bursts of white noise and piercing drones which break up the slow, undulating waves of Ambient sound.

Appliance D4 MUTE (MUTE243) CD
This is an obvious but well-executed idea: getting the glowing lights from the German electronic underground to remix neor-Krautrockers Appliance. The resulting EP offers fascinating examples of deconstruction, wherein Appliance's muscular originals are transformed into plucky avant-funk excursions. To Rococo Rock morph the driving "Soft Landing" into squelchy electronica, Tangerine Dream's "Throwing A Curve Ball" as reflective romanticism. Kreisler cut the manic "Hot Pursuit" into brittle angular shapes, and Ps radical re-edits "Heroes Of Tolkaan" into a hypnotic piece of metallic dub.

Emily Bezar Four Walls
Bleeding out (check 099) CD

This leftfield singer-songwriter from the San Francisco Bay Area combines intricate musical arrangements with swooning, virtuous vocal performances. The effect is a bit like encountering Kate Bush jamming with King Crimson. That is, her restlessly kinetic songs are burdened with frosty solos. When Bezar pitches the fond misandry, as on the ballad "Mayher Son" and the more seaste "Fugue Of Nooit", her talent shines more clearly.

Cyrus Reago Cyrus Reago (check
JONES 012) CD
Space is evidently the place where Cyrus Reago (aka Edward Robert) drifts off to in his studio, when he's not engaged with instrumental rock outfit Paul Newman. What started off as a side project using the deep space synthesizer drones of Klaus Schulze

and Isao Tomita as his basic template) has exploded into a more personalized galaxy of droning soundworks. Aided by producer Adam Wilcox (Windsor For The Derby), Cyrus Reago's music moves like a dead asteroid from speaker to speaker. Still, solenn and serene, it has a powerful presence. (Edwin Pouncey)

Doldrums Deep Trickery KRAMER (KRAM001) CD

Ecogram All Behind The Witchdoctor (KRAM010) CD

While it doesn't always bode well when musicians take themselves too seriously, laying on the irony can be equally tedious. With titles like "Free Festival Of The Stonebridge" and "Sparkling Deadheat" and a propensity for rambling psychedelia, Doldrums beat a retreat from the inventiveness of their Feng Shui album into a self-referential world of wiggled out space rock and sloopy atmospheres.

Reassessing digitally distorted loops, panels on the back of their gantry designed CD sleeve, Welsh group Ecogram are torn between pastiching psychedelic whimsy ("Herald Spies", "Cubefield") and pursuing a more adventurous creative impulse as displayed on the ethereal "In Shadow" and the extended last track "Specterget", which captures the genuine essence of psychedelia without getting mired in its surface trappings.

Family Of God Family Of God
CORRE (COR001) CD

An elaborately packaged reissue of the duo's 1998 debut, *Family Of God* is a double album of eccentric lounge-style electronica with occasional outbursts of tough rhythms and boisterous atmospheres. The sleeve note playfully boasts that this is "the greatest, phonographic record of all time". Well it's certainly eclectic and unpredictable but *Family Of God* is not nearly as witty or clever as they think. For every amusing dour (the steaming of Leonard Bernstein's "America"), there's a party bore inflicting unfunny jokes on a captive audience.

The For Carnation The For Carnation (check 06711) CD

From Louisville via Los Angeles, The For Carnation have an ex-Saint member in singer/keyboardist Brian McNaughton, but they're no remnant from Saint's pioneering math-rock diversions. Here they slow everything down and form songs around pared-back rhythms which they gradually flesh out into sweeping, epic dirges, while McNaughton's deep, husky voice rules their rippling, melodic undertones.

IOD Mundane Existence DE IRON MAN (IR0001) CD

These self-styled "intense gnarcore termites" from Birmingham rattle off a snappy ten tracks in 18 minutes. Delivered in indecipherable guttural "doom-tongue" vocals, their songs reveal (from the printed lyrics) a punarian digust with modern life in general and "straight" society in particular. Hard, fast, compressed Metal riffs and bludgeoning percussion make for a suitable accompaniment to their metamorphic song. It's interesting to spot the stylistic migrs – mega-Sabat riffing, hardcore punk, etc – as their numbers fly past. The 30-second best of "Fifth" signs off with a typically gory lyrical flourish, suggesting there's a humorous side to their antagonistic stance.

Gilbert Isbin Gilbert Isbin Plays

Nick Drake music (NICK001) CD
Belgian jazz guitarist Isbin performs ten improved versions of Nick Drake originals plus a composition of his own. After two decades of death cult obscurity, today's rehabilitation of Drake places as much stress on his music as his lyrics. The two are hard to separate, however, Isbin isolates the music element, improving light arpeggios around Drake's melodies. Occasionally his approach is illuminating, but Drake's starorial material, such as "Ride" and "What Will It End", hints at and ends up obscuring the raw qualities that made them special. Ironically, Isbin's own "Boymarbles" comes closest to realising the essence of Drake's style.

Longstone auto (GENEROUS SPACE AGE (GEN0001) CD

The second album from Mike Ward and Mike Cross straddles the boundary between bass-heavy electronica and noisy space rock. Sometimes they lean towards conventional electronic material, but overall their stringing mix of noise and calm pays off, especially when their constructions of distorted samples and white noise rattle the insides of their more considered, linear compositions. The bonus live EP is a mix of voc samples scattered over an urgent rhythmic track packed with outbursts of machine noise.

Brian McMahan & The Kitchen Ants Youth, cut (check 077) CD

This short and sweet EP from the former Electric Eel guitarist (not the ex-Saint mate) is the follow up to his impressive 1998 solo debut *LP An Inch Equal A Thousand Miles*. Soundlike an extract from a far larger work in progress, its four short titles offer yet a further example of McNaughton's mastery of hellucinatory rock. From the heavy-industry *VU* vibe that ripples through the title track, to the high octane guitar soliloquy of "Fire Brigade" and "Leave Before Tears", and the unsettlingly creepy finale "The Bishop, White", chances are you will never have

heard anything quite like this before. (Edwin Pouncey)

Milkshop Holly Three To Come
In sheep's disc (SHEEP001) CD

This is the second collection of songs from singer-songwriter Plaza Flynn and multi-instrumentalist and arranger Kramer. Flynn's voice is undoubtedly engaging and Kramer's production and arrangements are quietly forceful, but the whole is all very samey. Kramer's synths and restrained electric guitar embellishes her basic acoustic strumming, but he can't do much for the song's lack of dynamism. Some tracks do improve upon their debut: "Cowardice" has the hypnotic quality of earlier Kramer protégés Galaxie 500, and "Ocean Grove" has a more vibrant edge. That the latter is the only song co-written with Kramer suggests that closer collaboration would yield better results.

16 Horsepower Secret South
SUNTAKE (SUN001) CD

This Denver quartet uses traditional forms and instruments in a dynamic modern setting in a way that elevates them above the mass of Neil Young and Tom Petty wannabes cladding up the current alt country scene. For their third album, 16 Horsepower fully embrace a darker sensibility, infusing their country and folk idioms with a gothic sweep. Like a more subtle Gun Club, or a less literary Nick Cave, this is an inventive alternative reading of American roots music.

Doug Snyder & Bob Thompson The Rules Of Play (check 00814) CD

The 45 minute improvised title track dominates this release. Thompson's destrusive drumming and Snyder's equally skillful guitar play off one another throughout. Thompson sets the pace, alternating passages of relative calm with all-out bluster. Snyder's guitar is more problematic, coming over too clinical and brusque at times, but he often duels parts with little melodic note closures. The two shonier tracks are less tauting but easier to like, favouring restraint over endurance.

Storm And Stress Under Thunder And Fluorescent Light (check KNO 0076203) CD

The way the Chicago and New York based duo displays a fundamental disregard of the conventions of rhythm and structure on their second album places them at the vanguard of exploratory rock. Its nearest relation is last year's US *Maple* album. Taller, but *Storm And Stress* are more subtle, combining Ian Williams's croon with tightly compressed guitar firings and drumming. Accompaniment so loose it's continually on the point of disintegration. The effect is oddly engaging, generating a bizarre internal logic from unlikely sources.

in brief

classical

Reviewed by Julian Cowley

Hélène Breschand Harpsuite

61S015190 12

With Luciano Beno's *Sequence II* which opens this solo harp set, Breschand signals her allegiance to the gestural expressiveness of the 1950s avant-garde. John Cage's meditative *In A Landscape* describes another facet of the Persian harp's playing. Three improvisations, plus compositions by Yoshitaka Tana and Ton-Thanh Tan sustain the balance between conceptual boldness and nuanced delicacy of execution.

Mortos Feldman Crippled Symmetry

61S015190 2CD

Few composers have derived so much benefit from the advent of the CD as Morton Feldman. The subdued dynamics and extended durations of his later work are especially well served by the formal *Crippled Symmetry* (1983), lasting about an hour and a half, is a pure taste to sit and listen to than an exquisitely acoustic environment to move around in. California Ear Unit members Dorothy Stone on flute, percussionist Arthur Järvinen and Vicki Ray on piano and celeste bring a certain toughness and durability to the music's fragile patterns.

George Flynn

Trinity soul-hear 5C501 2CD

Chicago based Flynn composes and plays nimbly articulate piano music. *Konf* (1988), *Wound* (1976), and *Savage* (1993) were initially conceived and eventually completed as parts of *Trinity*, a vivid study on violence and reconciliation. *Savage* appears here for the first time. The other pieces, produced by pioneering electronics composer Tim Manzello, have been issued before. Taken together the effect is at once limny and expressive, monumental yet charged at all points with constructive energy.

Henryk Mikołaj Górecki

Totus Tuus/Chorus 1/Motetra

KOCH SCHMIDT 31201 2CD

Written in 1987 for a papal visit to Poland, *Totus Tuus* is a bouncy serene. *Motetra* (1981), also scored for unaccompanied choir, is typically gradual and understatedly beautiful. But *Chorus I*, composed in 1964 for 56 strings, is a welcome reminder that Górecki is an exact contemporary of Krzysztof Penderecki, and once shared his commitment to working with unorthodox orchestral sonorities. Yet then as now he favoured a syntax accommodating broad gestures rather than intricate detail.

Philip Grange Dark Labyrinths

BLACK BOX 611018 2CD

Philip Grange is a professor of composition at Exeter University. The opening piece is a tribute to Peter Maxwell Davies, one of his own teachers. Elsewhere, his inspiration is literary, with settings of poems by Edward Thomas, and Robert Louis Stevenson, and lessons drawn from the narrative practice of Umberto Eco. Willem Gordan and Lawrence Durrell. As ever, The Gemini Ensemble is equal to the technical requirements and expressive demands of these tenue, polished compositions.

Gurdjieff/De Hartmann

Music For The Movements

CHANNEL 610010 2CD/2LP 2002

GI Gurdjieff was one of the 20th century's best-known transmitters of esoteric lore, yet it seems he considered himself primarily a teacher of dance. 'Music to accompany his choreographed movements' is presented here by pianist Win Win Dulemen. The themes were Gurdjieff's, the notation and harmonisation were made by his regular collaborator Thomas De Hartmann. As on previous recordings of their work, by pianists including Keith Jolley, Céline Lye and Hobart Henck, the surprise is how sombre and ponderous these gentle Eurasian tolling pieces sound, considering they're intended as dance music.

Steve Heimbecker Anthology

The Enormousness of Cloud, Machinest

orientations or minimal 5015 2CD

Canadian sound artist Heimbecker creates unusually spacious and unturned montages. They may be reflections of his piano upbringings, but they are assuredly products of his sound sailing technique - locating open microphones in the sound space to generate frequency feedback loops as they are processed through digital delays. Voice and breath, gentle environmental sounds, small machines and a sense of humour are key ingredients. Much of it feels boundless, yet electroacoustic composition is rarely so hubristic as here.

If, Bwana

Clara Nostra 6101910

An hour long piece for mangled clarines 105.476 of them in fact, conjured up through multiple tracking. That density intensified by Alan Marples's speeded up and slowed down manipulations of initially improved material, results in a prolonged subterranean murmur, without a trace of

the source instrument's intrinsic neediness. It has something of the character of Diane Ridings's emerging drone pieces, consoling or menacing according to the *Isletel* mood.

Richard Lerman

A Matter Of Scale And Other Phobia Anomalies

LEPHAN 1 CD

A San Francisco-based sonic explorer and video artist, Lerman is dedicated to making objects sound. He amplifies slimy coils and builds his own 'tinkles', uses a *Phaser* electric transducer discs and theremin wire. On recording he also makes microphones react to a small propane torch and plays amplified bicycle alongside Tom Hamilton's synthesizer and Bertrand Moon's guitar. A Master Of Scale documents four performances staged between 1981 and 1997, including one in the Houston Astrodome. Essential listening for lovers of granular metallic music and spacious twinkling.

Chris Newman

Sed

Secrets New French Tunes

CONTINUAR 5001 2CD

Contemporary classical music's most engaging four last, Chris Newman manages to push his artless art songs beyond banality to a point where interest inexplicably revives. Henrik Lowermeyer's piano accompanies the composer's unabashedly crude vocalising. At times on *Sed* Newman sounds like a laudate Peter Hammill impersonator while Hoffnung purifies New French Tunes is music turned out and stripped absurdly bare; somehow it is as fascinating as it is often irritating.

Steve Heimbecker

Curried Gods

OPEN PIANO 6101910 4 CD

Jaclyn Roberts' enhanced audio verte compositions are structured to uncover the latent meaning of the American way of life at least as it's lived on 'a typical afternoon in the backyard in Phoenix, Arizona'. Routine sounds are configured sometimes electronically processed to disclose the pantheon presiding over daily activities and assumptions. Impressively crafted to deliver unsettling perceptions concerning home, the street, war and the family.

Tehuda Yannay

Hiddan

Melodica 6101910 2CD

Yannay trained initially in Israel, and now works in Milwaukee. Tidy wind-dominated chamber pieces start off and emphatic settings of poems by William Carlos Williams close, but the attention-grabbing heart of *Hiddan* lies in *Im Siberow* (In The Silver Forest), a remarkable 30 minute piece which places assertive trombone voicings against an edgy precarious drone, generated by electronics in combination with glass harmonica.

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in brief

critical beats

Reviewed by Ian Penman

Beanfield The Seafarers (2001)

Wherefrights might find the prospect of this weekender's dose of lite-Afrika/PC poetry a bit Giles Peterson — a bit Taken! Loud but probing nothing. But on the Swag remix at least Munch's Beanfield swing like seraphim, while poetess singer Björk has a voice like sun on an autumn day, and a nice line in *Song Of Songs* comme- like something which does you good, but also sales wickedly fine.

Thomas Brinkmann

Groovin' (Soul Center) SOUL CENTER (MUSIK 11)

Thomas Brinkmann Ultra/Verka (CD, no. 1001-1). This German boy can do no wrong in my Powerbook, even if you need a degree in crystalology to work out that TB has his self is hiding behind the confusion of signatures? (JB? WNB? 7) appeared to these luscious hints of retro (1979-82) disco retooling. Under the gaze of pseudonymy and art-hag handmades overtaux dappled icon, Brinkmann goes on a kind of Metal Euro nostalgia with raw sex denominator. A real treat for those of an age to remember the dawn of the '12' Pet owners should note that the sampled James Brown screams on 'Soul Center' frazzled my cats out bigtime — and they'll used to the higher frequencies. My little Whiskaz homes.

The Creators The Hard Margin (2001) HUGO RECORDS 12"

This offbeat amble stands out hood and tanners from the Old Skool pad. The street version of the title track is truly hot like osmoplasmy. A sort of mesh of malevolent production, Tab Kwon's incendiary raps and Hes' D's sharp rhymes — "Hotter than summer in Kirosho-wei (Franz Capolla and Dario 'Hopper') ends in a Brooklyn-meets-Trenchtown crewz Babel zone. They even rhyme 'God's a'fer' with 'Godzillaz' — hasn't anyone thought of doing that before?

Christoph De Babalon vs. Kid-G66 TITANIC RECORDS (MUSIK 11)

Truly harder than the rest, the might be. Whatever of the Month if we did things that way. I've accessed Babalon before on DHR and Mike Plusone, but Kid-G66 — a 20 year old whiz (in many senses) kick out of San Diego — is new to me, and big news. The 11 tracks here are an incredible slam across all current registers in Console

Notes: Two of Babalon's four are headwarm drum 'n' quark, one an abrasif swoon into darkcore Ambient, the other just Other out there — a charismatic prism-blur. Kid-G66's range is simply jaw-dropping: streets-ahead cut 'n' smash ('80s Mu', crack-nash plunderphonics ('Plaster') etgely beautiful Ambient slice ('Caring Is One Thing') 2.3 Stetson-ish come-down others 'When It Feels Wrong'). For the pre-teens, I can see how this might knock your head clean off — the way Hendrix's 'Voodoo Chile' once did for me something fallen out of the title block beyond and beckoning you on up, out of tan for everything.

ELF/Attention Disorder

Attention Industries (HUM 102) 12"

I expected this to be all Revolutionary Terror slash n' chum (I'm confusing them with some other Elf or Goldin?), but it's searingly beautiful in a Immortal style. ELF is the live-av of Stuttgart's Mike Zammertin, in partnership with Berliner Karten Drohnen. Attention Disorder is his home-alone side. ELF more experimental AD more sensual, roughly speaking. The ELF side is a long drivewhirl with clouds of ion stung low over a swampy bubble-fabule (reminiscent of London's Basement Car). The AD side is more linear but just as entrancing.

Jazz JOPOLIO (no-comics) 12"

Some sparkly retro jazz: Brinkmann's party line it's 1982! but with more of a jazz funk/latin fusion vibe. The ferociously upbeat 'Sheep' (nearly) swallows 12' and one early Weather Report-like track builds slowly into a footswell of diamond piano met' lectonic bass and 'live' at the Village Gate percussion. Jazz — aka Tokyo DJ Mochi — last remixed The Boredoms and is about to remix Robert Johnson? As it so often goes, that could wake Freddie Johnson screaming in the night. I just a Po'Mo, a long way from home?

Markus Kienzl TITANIC RECORDS 12"

Debut solo outing from Markus Kienzl based with Austrian beatmobs Sola Surfers and a quietly impressive automaton strike it too. His basis is heavy metal at once singular and naggingly familiar. His feel for ox-harvested atmospheric Barry Adamson seemingly effortless strikingly nor effortlessly unchallenged. The A-side is two shards of plucked down metal funk

crisis cutting cauterized but things really sear on the boy's man-suit of urban unrest, protracted disintegration from 'Notes While Being Haiced' through the specify 'Werk' (the lads holds on hard to sanity as things start to unravel to the spectral diril of 'Lumpen Park', where things ebb away on a crystal wave of Get On With It Mission). Smile, you're on closed circuit camera.

Kraftwerk Expo 2000 (HUM 102) 12"

From the Hermit which gave us Goethe and Faustbinder, Kraftwerk's recent works might be forgiven if never mind the quantity, let the force applied it doesn't. 'Expo' is strictly 'Tongue, Matthew we've got 'Expo' leaving aside the big question of what they're doing parting issue Eurosport sponsorship banalities of there is a Hegelian auto-critique here it's lost in the self-parodic irreverence of their sound — the sort of sound of which people say it couldn't be anyone else, at about the time no one else would want it anyway! sonically this is just 'Trans Europe Express' with Blair-era design group rebranding.

Munk Jhino & Beserk' Pt 1 (no-comics) 12"

Strebe-issue scratch and patch from Munich duo Mueda and Imbry. After the so-so '13.5' the other three tracks are sheer alchemical mind exorcism: locker-like a loon brother, lovely plucked-tails driven beats unpredictable (free jazz) samples and dub-gone-crazy logic like a mothemque. 'Mumu's Blues' is cod opera in a genuinely uncanny log 'Stilemann' full of unfornseen humps 'n' bounces, very like falling down Duchamp's stairs 'Holland' (Dove, presumably) is EDM meets the Black Ark up on the 23rd floor ledge.

Matthias Schaffhäuser LUDIC (HUM 102) 12"

German techno label Force Inc's decision to rebrand its House subsidiary and thus abandon its bombastic assault output for a deeper sound was something of a disappointment. But this original take on Tech House by Ware label boss Matthias Schaffhäuser, shows the new direction coming together nicely. Tracks like 'Prost' follow the conventions of the genre with style as Phrasie-esque bass throb and intersected percussive clicks are given release by a warm synth wash. Also excellent is the title track with its stuttering high keys, quick electro beats and a fearsome hammer bass oscillation. On a less conventional tip, there's the Teutonic gloop of 'Zet Rimm' — disco on downers with Nico-esque vocals and randomly plucked strings (Mike Shultz).

Ivan Schmidt The Swivel (WAVE 8.12")

"The Swivel" Marches out on this four track sample of Manz man Schmidt's Ware waves. Two tracks are formulaic blues, but my antennae shivered at the exquisite rolling thunder bass of both "The Swivel" and closer 'ds 56 2'.

Spectre The End (wave sound) WAVE 7.12"

One for all the gothic homes out there who think Wu-Tang are lightweight. With titles like 'The Beginning Of The End', and 'Kali Yuga (Age Of Desolation)', you know you're in for it in peepshow and crutch shots was produce artist Spectre — but there is dark humour, like his phone message EX rap 'I'm not home right now! I'm out with some smok', plus one moment of stellar beauty on the female voxes 'The Last Time', the equal of Massive Attack on one of their Aenima hits. At double LP length it gets a bit 'Sesame Street' spels out etymology, but the wry and heavy production (including deftly dark wobles and Kung Fu flutes), with its intermittent da/Rata/daRata returns, kept drawing me back in, even when I wasn't feeling schizoid out. There is weight here, and breadth. At the beginning of the 21st century, The End might just prove to be one phenomenal masterpiece.

Yoshinori Sunahara Clippers (Discotheque Breaks) (WAVE 12")

More low '70s sounds! higher pastiche, this time more BlackyDyke 4-2-D-Talkuned floor. The Ch, c'est ce? 'Discotheque' is Yosh's own light fingered remix of his 'Hysteres' (yep, very 70s, see, now?). We also get two 'Lovebeat' remixes from Ego Express and Nicole Conte — the latter a melting salmy 'Can I take you back to my Soir' London bachelor pad samba. Sign not to get nostalgic on yer ass, but I can almost taste the tequila, lime and early lacey lacquer.

Twig A Day In The Life Of A Production Operative (HUM 102)

Dropped at 33, this sounds like a dream dial snagged between Throbbing Gristle and a jungle-primate station, at its 'proper' 45, 'Ragged Jig' and 'PGH' sum up to be a bit crude, although 'Crappin'ahula' paves the way for 'Factory Work'. Based on Steven 'Twig' Gowers' time in a calcitrant Danics factory, it's a disturbingly sheltered distortion, alarm bells musical RSI. The nightmare joyousness of the wavy slate — the masochistic night-owl-like-out pleasure Lyricist identified as the missing component in Manz's catalogue — finds purchase here in jagged oscillation between unbearable real-time squeals and a relentless toll of smedlock beats. (L)

in brief dub

Reviewed by Steve Barker

Cornell Campbell I Shall Not Remove 1975-1980 (ccco 6) £16.99

Ex-Unique member Cornell Campbell was sandwiched between Johnny Clarke and Delroy Wilson as a favoured vocalist of producer Bunny Lee. The album brings together many of the singer's best sides for Lee and all but one of the 11 cuts are extended versions with dubwise. King Tubby in particularly ferocious mood. The set opens with three tributes to Lee in his alternative guise as The Gorgon. Particularly noteworthy is the seven minute "Dance In A Greenwich Farm" with toasting from Dr Almarrando entitled "Chance Above". Great artwork and 70s fashion tips from Cornell are a bonus.

Creation Rebel Starship Africa. (CCM 00001) £10.99

Dub Syndicate One Way System. (W 00000) £10.99/CD £12.99 Two stone cutters from On-U's back catalogue, released simultaneously and officially for the first time on CD. Creation Rebel's *Starship Africa* was the first and only album issued back in 1980 by On-U's precursor the short-lived 4D Rhythms. Constructed from a bunch of rhythms cut for 70s iteration DJ Superstar, the final mixdown was achieved 'blind' when the tape was flipped over and played backwards for the effects to be fed in — all done in a day of course. The album still awaits recognition as the only possible soundtrack for William Gibson's as yet unfinished *Neuromancer*.

One Way System was 1983's follow-up to Dub Syndicate's debut, *The Pounding System*. Very much a pre-modern album in that, rather than being created from scratch, its tracks virtually constituted a dub version of Singers & Players' *Stoppage Heights* (also scheduled for reissue later this year). Contemporary reggae journalists did not take kindly to this kind of 'experimental' recording — especially from a white English boy — and it was still two or three years before the digital tsunami of Steel Ting would change the way we heard everything labelled reggae. Now we can give albums like this the time and space they deserve.

Dubwise Productions Roots Connection (various) £10.99/CD £12.99

This album serves as a fitting emblem of the vision and sense of purpose which prevails in the UK's new roots movement. The eight vocal tracks are written by Chris

Dubwise Jai in partnership with roots legend Junior Marvin from JA, UK stalwart Winston Farquah and London newcomer Danny Vibes. All are dubbed up by a quartet that represents the toughest mobbed around — Dougé Wardrope, Russ Bell-Brown, Gussie P and Lee Diggs. With the reggae zine *Step Forward* thrown in this package provides a good entry point into a subculture that can seem impenetrable without proper initiation.

G Corp Dub Plates From The Elephant House. (various) £10.99/CD £12.99

An album of dub-influenced House might be the last thing we need, but G Corp (whose pedigree includes Electro 101 and The Groove Corporation) dug straight at the dub end and come out with a set that

demones the right balance between reverence and connoisseur for pixel, as straight to the wacky titled "Worst Dressed Chicken" which, while using all the trademarks of reggaedub production, is such a then and upstanding sound you wonder why these guys never made a fortune in the mainstream

Jackie Mittoo The Keyboard King At Studio One. (UNIVERSAL SOUND LTD)

The commercial success and excellent presentation of their *Percentage* singles convinced Clement 'Coxone' Dodd that cooperation with the Soul Jazz/Universal Sound outfit might not be such a bad idea. This 15-track compilation is mainly selected from the likes of Jackie Mittoo's early *Soul Doctor* albums, with the exception of a couple of tracks from the overlooked Showcase set recorded in the early 80s. Although *Mojo* is central to the development of all the modern Jamaican genres, this immediate set could stand the test against the likes of The MIs or The Metes. What I love specifically about these tunes and many others from the same source and of the same vintage, is their deceptive MOJO-sishes which evaporate totally when you ramp up the bass. We are promised a further selection of Jackie's best from the label, next time from producers such as Bunny Lee and Sugar Minott.

Lev Perry Truth & Wisdom 1971-1975 (VANISHIN MOOD CO) £10.99/CD £12.99

Lee 'Scratch' Perry Techno Party (various) £10.99/CD £12.99

Lee 'Scratch' Perry On The White (various) £10.99/CD £12.99

Of the three sets listed above only the first can be recommended, and even that not to

a first-time buyer. An Australian compilation sourced via a dubious licensing deal via Perry's ex-wife Pauline Morrison and their son Omar, all the tunes are dubbed from disc which without exception are rare, classic or both. Certainly the average Pemphrey will snap this up, but with cuts from Augustus Pablo, I Roy, The Hesitones, Dennis Alcapone and Leonard The Egyptian, Ollion, this collection from the producer's golden period will have a wider appeal. By contrast, the lazy tired Techno Party is no party, being largely an exercise in creating rhythm beds for Scratch to lay down in. If all the tunes were up to the standard of the closing track — mixtape drums in bass-mixes, rock稳 rock underpinned by Has Professor — then it would be the best Upsetter album since *Time Beom X De Devil Des*. On The Wire apparently dates from ten years ago, two tracks including the title-tune, "The Grim Reaper", are certainly of On-U Sound provenance, but without the necessary credits on the sleeve. The Upsetter strikes again!

Ernest Ranglin Sounds and Power (various) £10.99/CD £12.99

This set appeared a couple of years ago riding on the back of Ranglin's new-found and well-deserved fame in the wider World Music arena. Now available as vinyl LP

The reggae composer's first-choice format despatch the notorious deficiencies of the Jamaican vinyl recycling industry — this is a must. To hear the trademark picking style of Jamaica's foremost jazz guitarist on top of those timeless rhythms from Studio One is a real treat. There's also a good dose of sub-funk wah-wah on top of the bass to avoid any accusations of smoothness. Whether he actually gets paid for his composition credits on several tunes is another matter.

The Rootsman/Daddy Freddy (Imulator) (various) £10.99/CD £12.99

Daddy Freddy/He-Man □
Super Clash (various) £10.99/CD £12.99 (Bradford's Rootsman is building up a solid following across Europe, but these tough 12s see him dropping the Middle Eastern rhythms and vocal motifs which informed his recent work and returning to his home ground. "Imulator" was remixed from 99's *Realms Of The Unseen* release on BSI). Italian Hipskip fat Zapp's scintillating remix contrasts with the smo-mix from US dubster Systemwide. He-Man, deadly from the King Dragon stable in Kingston, serves up the abstract "Killer", a choo-choo cut across the two pieces. The Rootsman is one of the few no-school dub producers

Capable and confident of moving between basement tempos such as these and the roots tunes which made his name.

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Unexplained Transmissions is the solo project of Roots' Randall Nisbett. This is the debut album which calls together six previously released limited-edition vinyl-only albums originally released on the Mind Expansion label in 1998.

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in brief

electronica

Reviewed by Rob Young

Autopopiesis Live À Nuit Ronde

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Transposed EP MILLE MAREAU MPP 7" 2001

Double Deutsch sleepwalks don't help this complex but keenly impressive plungeraphonia. Pissed poles wobble about head transfers ("crackles in hisograms") merely dull the aural shock of these spectacular electronica transformations. Unlike the matry Fenni! Ben too the Frankfurt duo allow subdued, hazy hues to dominate, with an ever present kindling blaze springing underneath. Whatever the original sample sources, most of the tempos float free of context, so when the occasional bass solo or baa-sucking clatter emerges, it's a vital sign an arm waving amongst carapace dabs. The Transposed EP contains further reworkings of their '99 studio CD by Tome Thorelli, Kit Clayton, Vladislav Delay and Gez Valley plus 2B locked grooves.

Boulderdash We Never Went To Kokut Island MTHRECORDS UNDER CONSTRUCTION ARTISTS CD

Plod Pillow Talk with INTERFACE 19012 CD

Two Swedish acts feed their native syntactic syllable-syllabus into electronica's linguistic mire. Boulderdash's Daniel Skarpon and Hans Molle suffer a little from Scandinavian cosiness. "Electronic style music," says the small print on their sleeve, and so it goes. These are shufflebeats for mudding around a Brick Lane clothes emporium.

Plod are trying to hard to wrench raw samples and sounds into songlike structures (label without wordier than let the electricity follow its own tangled, roty logic. Very verse-chorus, verse-chorus — you can soon anticipate exactly when the changes are gonna come in their electro-ditties.

Brüsseler Platz 10A-Musik/Hanich/Geert Lovink

1000 Fasseln 100004 12" 104 FR CD

Various past and present members of Cologne's A-Musik collective supply a noisy background mix for the spoken word collection of theory-fragments by Agitkino (Foundation of the Advancement of Digital Knowledge Amsterdam). Suppose have previously issued "straight" recordings of EM Goran and philosopher Vilém Flusser, so it's good to see them taking a more creative hand in presenting the difficult work, which basically argues that theory is never enough. Accordingly Georg Odijk Jan St

Werner and Marcus Schmädel get stopped by the CDs sumptuous and consumer electronics and the whole thing is wowed together by Hapsh a lost figure from the scene who seemed to have disappeared forever.

Datash1 (Rock'n'Play) CARBONIA CARBONIA CD

Zan Lyons Warning Facts HOMONYME RECORDS HOMO CD

Datash1 is New York's Joseph A. Fraoli, created here with everything from the music and production to the infatuate panmix on the sleeve — none too impressive, this distant rip-off of Aphex Twin's chidlike screw. Much of this rasping drum'n'bass is summed up by the last track title, "Dizzy Fizz," but calling another song "The real getaway" these are reports from a light splinter, too much gentleman's-excuse me and not enough assualt. Zan Lyons from London is aiming at a similar crackle-seaweed consistency, but adds dignified, mournful strings and William Orbit style synth-chorus. What next — Engine goes Galax?

Exos Eleventh Floor MC MPT011 CO

Attwood Sherman's two Exos EPs for the Icelandic Thule label were quiet masterpieces of inchoate morphology. He's full length debut looks on to an unexpectedly massive pulse at first, but soon begins drawing out the highly strung, elastically of the BÖB rhythm box. Then there's little here you haven't already heard on CDs by Porter Ricks, Various Artists, etc., the imitation remains consistently baffling rather than pale, with just the right admixture of sadness and optimism forward motion.

Than 1000 MILLE MAREAU MPP 7"

In which the surface of skin seems to become damaged than and Maya — two design students from Toulouse, we're told — come across like a tougher version of Sheffield duo Ind. With the toughness comes a certain aspercom that might knock much of this inventive music into the same blank, faceless cell that corrugated much of the 20th century avant-garde to oblivion. Every track in "Sans Tete" some of them are a little heavy on the executive toy factor ("767" and "75") sound like glonle 6 metallic clocks counting off several time zones simultaneously; all of which causes lots to end too far on the side of sound design rather than trading a machine for living in

Kid-606 Kid-606 And Friends Vol. 1 HOMONYME HOMO CD

An awesome sleepover party this turned out to be. For this 1B track rema fest, the San Diego Kid's has railed his friends from all across the United States of America if the Kid's originals sound kitch and howered, his friends are given leave to re-solder his Radio Shack circuit boards from their own bags of spares. Hirata boots up a renegade voice synthesis program to sing a Kid-606 story over some trademark clattering breakbeats. Lucky Kitchen's Aeron Bergman and Leawakunti hunker down with some electric-psychedelics. Matmos continue to reign supreme with a groovy imaginary biker movie theme. Meanwhile locked in the basement, Christophe De Barde, Twisted Science and SHW spin-off Vomit World are running an airtight club, beating the tracks senseless with digital catgut. Infinitely more than the average backslapping rema album, this is a collective migration running riot. Brilliant stuff.

Kohn (Kohn) K RIA K 04 CD

Betgum De Bont (the unlikely sounding Jurgens De Bont) is not afraid to use the unusual liberally, which raises his game, although by the time you get to titles like "The Witch Of Kohn," enough is enough. There's something here for everyone — Some Youn liked his first LP so much they invited him on tour. Kohn has VVTP's knock for bringing out the most pinching aspects of found sounds, the brass band on "Wilen" is Koenen's stunning Hindemith glaciare, Ryöka-idea-like sine-scanning tones, and Steve Roden style transmutes of acoustic objects (violin and acoustic guitar). While these tracks are explicitly offered up as a personal take on the music, not as byproducts of a global scene, the most affecting is the closing utopian song, where the mysterious Mr Kohn describes himself blinking into the sunlight after a long nocturnal session of the computer.

Matak Matak sub Rosa SR162 CD

Sub Rosa have a knack of unearthing hereto unheard Japanese electronica. Bass's teetering, spitting, sputtering suggestions are one of the catalogue's high points. Matak (Hanenburo Yanagida) is their best find. It seems strange among this batch of glitches, tones and drones to hear something so rooted in Hip-Hop rhythms and piano riffs, and while a lot of these seven tracks have a slightly dated feel, now they're certainly more fratty than some of the cold cuts on offer elsewhere in this month's pile.

Jake Mandell A-Musik/Carbondam

Current 1000 MILLE MAREAU MPP 7" 100004 CD

Low volume wif polished industrial ambience from this US producer. "Emulsified Oscillate" jacks off with a stringtangled drum track but its spectral

signs hint at the music's greater subtleties the soft patterning drums and quiet bass notes of "Enchanted Philist" the hell-melodies and snarling hi-hat trills of "Jacob." The style reaches its apogee on "Technic Shring," whose percusive number and synth creeps float its rhythms in stereo space, but equally enjolys in the more conventional "Arbored Brow" whose solitary boozing kickdrum and desolate sing line sound like dance music for deserved nightclubs. There are nozis to mentors Baal, Chennel on "Red Ascension," a mid-tempo kickdrum stomp and Plasmarian on the sevily micropercussion of "Knotted Bush." But overall Mandell's set is confident in its own chaos (Mike Shattock).

Pacos State Of Mind TERRIBLE 18 CO

There's not beating about the bush with Berlin DJ-producer Pacos, and his third LP similarly allows for plenty of repetition and little deviation from the purring motor of his supply house rhythmatism. There's no finer example of tense pulsing Eurobeat on chrome disc than this wooly, sweeping regime. Far from the increasingly justbut grooves of Cologne, tracks like "Felt" scour the ears and luncate the joints. Drum machines bleed with the aurora of distortion, stoned steel rhythm meshes trigger like AK47 bursts.

Pulse Programming Prelim

ATMOSPHERES NO NUMBER CO

The amazin black sleeve keeps details on this project close to its chest, but this is probably the closest that Chicago's Aesthetics imprint will get to the jagged green worlds of first-generation Ambient. Carrying that vaguely hawky, angular feel from the likes of Enya's Apollo (and reminding you that the only music, extraballs were permitted to take with them on the first moon landing was Country and Western) these pulse programmers achieve a swoony drift. Labradford would kill for.

Miki Yui Small Sounds amu usa 8848802 CD

Ambient... not perfume, but radioactive fallout. This capsule of inhabitable atmospheres comes shrouded softly in a fat sputum — well boys will be Boys. Made in Cologne, Yui's cobbled-together noise collages are intended to dust the air 'tac those important little mental spaces. Listen to it if the required transparent level and the various swirling notes and flecks of noise hang so lightly in the air you almost breathe them in rather than hear them. Turn up the volume and the weird digital compressed effect is similar to listening to plane conversations when your ears are popping. Of the numerous current macrosonic CDs out there, this one's a keeper.

in brief

hiphop

Reviewed by Dave Tompkins

Bumpy Knuckles Bumpy

Knuckles/Baby/Stock In The

Ghetto (757-542-6599/12) Though Q-Tip once mused all his "Knuckles got 'nay," New York's Bumpy Knuckles (ronic Freddie Fox) is the naysayer. The Premier-produced "Part Of My Life" was one of last year's more convincing singles, proving Bumpy doesn't sacrifice flow for guffawes and flowties. Produced by Alchemist, "Stock In The Game" is all woodwind punches and brass flourishes. Meanwhile, B Knuckles puts you on a lead diet. We pack your teeth up and put 'em on a song like bones and send your punk ass home alone." Pepe Rock provides Bumpy Knuckles' Baby with a rasping piano, over which Bumpy says, "This is the day I couldn't kill was gone." Sometimes, there's a lot in a name.

Common Like Water For

Chocolate (Interscope/12) A 'Hoodoo' album that opens with 14 minutes of live Afrobition? In which Roy Hargrove's trumpet invokes the sea, Tony Allen gets loose and Common makes sure his dad's phone is connected. Welcome to the Chicago MC's fourth and best album, inspired by Laura Esquivel's novel of the same name and produced by The Roots' Ahmir Thompson. On "Ghetto Heaven" (Angelo honours The Family Stand's panan its rocktups-at-dawn piano emotives like Ray's "The World Is Yours" and Common recognises "It's they o' lost man in 'souls"). On "Cold Blooded" his necktie bends. Hargrove huffs through a grisly guitar arpeggio. Common cuts with injections on "Funny For You" (the disco lever shoot-out). "We'll tell 'cause I pushed 'em" he admits on "Doubt," both serving and saving MCs. The Question' wonders like A Tribe Called Quest's "What" as Common contests his own claim and Nas' Del gets Jack Handey with the homilies: "Why do I need 10 to get 12?...". Meanwhile, DJ Premier emotes ("San Sense") the real 89 MC Lyte emotives ("A Firm Called") Fern Kuja drops by and we're all wear for it.

Dilated Peoples The Platform/Annihilation (Interscope/12)

Damn that laughing horn introlude for not breeding for more than 18 seconds! Over an eddying harpsichord track, Dilated producer/MC Evidence gains capacity crowds with lines like "I know my hunger's rotted salt/ get noxious of sounds." Across stage Incubus is "The one to spot on microphones and leave 'em dead." Produced by Alchemist, "Annihilation" uses clavinet 45

Junk with blasts of strings and guitar. DJ Babu, meanwhile, continues to run stringent quality assurance tests on the wax.

Kid Koala Carpal Tunnel

Sympathetic (Interscope/12) The Jungle Brothers' zooty gong grunts on 1988's "Soul of The Solar" and Kid Koala does chicken click funk in 2000. On 96's "South West Razzle Dazzle" tape, he made a beat from Charlie Brown's rats but Carpal Tunnel Syndrome is daily Thundershirt life, spraycan and the sounds of "a bag of gigs falling off a car." The jargony war of "Shut Hear" could be a circadian scatula scratch the same way Manilow's guitar emulated a mirell. Likewise, the Huppyfumber sputterings in "Music For Moving People" preface beseeching on "Nerdville." The words "we are" are fused into electro dials that could back the "Five Rhythm" track class. "Scruffabuff" sounds like Frog and Toad sooshing through a mushroom patch at the pace of Billie Holiday's "They're Coming To Take Me Away Ho-Ho-Ho!" The sassy will singe pocket change to the step-bus and stun-your-socks-at "Night At Nubana." Break free themselves in unusual positions and dialogue's gmermyned for Koala's absurdist. "That, of course, is what he deserved for pretending to be a musician when he was only a butcher."

D'Angelo Voodoo (Interscope/12)

D'Angelo's "Untitled" (seven minutes!) sounds like Prince's "Do Me Baby" and "Slow Love" got together and made the best with two backs. But don't flush your girlified laminate just yet. Conjoined beneath the skin and shaped to the coccy, Voodoo is what Lil' Grady Lewis would call "you snookin'" where one-man harmonies lull stiff lark rimmers. On "The Root" the Marvin Gaye drem mode "From the pot at the bottom that know no floor" as Charlie Hunter's guitar turns inside out. "Devil's Re" breaks down the properties of zombie power to DJ Premier's tricole down keys. "Demons screaming in my ear'all my anger off my face!" (oller) let them hearin this springin' shere. "Feel Like Makin' Love" is a Roberto Facci incubator with a dirty hand胎膜o "Africa's" tri-level cadence will issue Meekin' feris behind stamped on their tired R&B baggage.

J. Live The Best Part (Interscope/12)

Read between the rhymes, J. Live is the verbal presidgitor. On the title track produced by DJ Premier, the Harem

English teacher quotes a student who it turns out, paints him in the album's classroom intro. On "War Paper" produced by Prince Paul, Live continues to rock doubles, persistently scratching the head of both frag and linc producer. Here turntable arog takes a come span. "Every move they made was guided by the unison hand." Paul's twinkling keyboard morphs into "Timewest," where a very similar swirlie from producer Chris Corayst is joined by reflective horn swirls and where J. Live's "stygies are banded too steep to be measured by the sands of the hour glass" other words, built to last." The Pete Rock produced "Rock It To The Beat" gives some hope to the oft abused girl-on-track metaphor. Live's aste funky drumming on "Don't Play" and observes the senseless on "Rage." "The blind man's son will be the stamp father of a blind child."

Taj Mahal The Present

Awfulizing/Hunger For The Whore (excusis entertainment/12) On "Hunger For The Whore," Taj Mahal asks, "I is wrong for me to wanta recite the eight poems of a stoning niggas dropped in Carolina's 17th" (Dealing in Raleigh North Carolina, Taj Mahal has a softening obsession with the pen) "inlincting grav-elit ridmz over a boss split that is paced with a parries, wind-in'er effed. Sharpening his fingers under Super DJ Clark Kent's tutelage producer Se Re Sound has previously contributed a remix to the Scott La Rock tribute. "Man And His Music." On the hook Mahal meets patois with a Bucky Womack chart while Sound cuts a "one two three" into his own synecdochic as Meekel confirms, Hohoh as you make it."

2Pac & The Outlaws Still I Rise

Interscope (007434112) The last lamented icon is unexpectedly Conscious Like Curtis on the righteous "Letter 2 The President" ("Baby Don't Cry") a tender message for megastars past? and the self-explanatory "Bandits & Closed Caskets" an Un-Era cousin to Raylend's own "Billy Joe." Highly, the leisously upright "Hell 4 A Hustler," where gospel truth and clinical paroxysm eye each other wally across an external waiting room. In places Shukur sounds split in two playing the part of wise father figure for himself — apparently sick unto death of the colour-coded cliches he has to keep speaking out to survival. Unbelievable irony that the same mad survivalist ethos failed one more prematurely old young black men this one with the paroxysm, mettle of the true Oracle about him. Star-Perman

Zion I Critical/Versus (rapzone/12)

The Big Apple's Zion I sounds like an improvement of Group Home's Melancholy. "I walk the rugged avenue with my B Boy" may. Very busy gaudi Planet Asia mimesis be in several places simultaneously. "My plan is to stand behind every line I stated." On the original version of "Critical" nearaged keyboard notes stutter over an expanding rap. As with Los Angeles People Under The Stars, Zion I's production snuzs staid tempos. Lordpack's Madlib does a three-in-one remix, shifting narrative by applying a different melody, storyboard to each verse and linking them with crackling soundbites. Also included is a tauntly phrased Piero which is followed by baritone doobiebell beat.

Boyz Byrd warning "Yim comin" and a tea kettle blisterng your ear and burning an ill-adjusted racing stripe in your high-top fade. Tea kettle (or Maple Parker's screaming seal appears courtesy of compiler Marly Mar! Featuring Marly's Juicy Crew All-Stars, "The Symphony" crossed the species for all future pose me passages. Elsewhere on "It's A Demer," Kool G Rap sings his lab Craig G's classic "Dropper Science" prefigures Bigges "One More Chance" remix, and MC Shan's "The Bridge" headdutes the Bronx. On "The Boz" "Majestic Ace trades rhymes with himself emulating Boz Marley, while on "Just Rhythm" With Big Daddy Kane Kool G Rap and Kene's lyrics of lury on the unreleased drums-only version of "Raw" is worth paying for the in full. And that's a capital F on the full and the fury because you'll scurry around meowing. Why can't they make she like that no more?"

Various Artists Wordlab Vol. 1

excusis entertainment/CD 2002

A compilation of UK Hiphop that shows the scene to be as healthy as it's ever been. The major players on the scene are all represented: Mark B, Skitz, Roots Manuva, Lewis Parker. But it's the more unknown quantities that promise the most. Bratik's "Plastic Chair" drops in a minor key piano motif with all the emotional precision of the RA Aspects' West County twang. suggests an individuality miles from that cool-UD delivery that blights too much hometown music. Like's tribute to Stephen Lawrence, "In Memory," overtly acknowledges the scene's shift to the reggae soundsystems that many seem determined to hold. The key to this album's success lies in the artists' belief in their own reference-free identity. The opening track by Mark B and Blakie speaks of the stigma attached to UK Hiphop that holds the genre back. The rest of the album simply ignores that stigma and delivers the goods. (Peter McIntyre)

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in brief jazz

Reviewed by David Keenan

Sam Bardfeld's *Cabal Fatale*

Toxidromy (rrp £19.99).
Violinist Sam Bardfeld's CV is certainly an eclectic one, ranging from sessions with hard bopper Bill Barwon through time spent with John Coltrane and Bruce Springsteen. Here he works with bassist Drew Gress and drummer Mike Saenz, both of whom served time in trumpeter Dave Douglas's string group. So it's not altogether surprising that Bardfeld has the same delicately prurient grace that characterised Douglas's series of pocket-Balkan pieces. Bardfeld's compositions are as scattered over the map as his CV would suggest, taking in vaguely ragtime swagger, small chamber movements and drunken boogies.

Abdelhaii Bennani Quartet

Enfance (rrp £12.99).

Bennani is an interesting theorist who brings a variety of off-the-wall approaches to his guitar-blowing. Chant-singing or guaging into his sax; he summons up swarms of chattering voices which sometimes sound like a roomful of semi-men muttering to themselves. That said, the *Enfance* sessions are fairly low key affairs, but the presence of the great Alan Silva on bass does occasionally raise the endeavour to a level of austerer drama. Izu Oto moves between trumpet, flugelhorn and fluty Indian flutes, proving some nice colour, but the group never comes around any particular idea long enough for it to take hold.

Peter Brötzmann-Sabu

Toyozumi Duo Live (rrp £19.99).
1962 reissue (rrp £10.99).
Originally released in Japan in a ludicrously limited edition, this killer session is paramountly reissued in another numbered small run. Drummer Yoshisaburo "Sabu" Toyozumi's name might ring some bells as

part of Charles Mingus's fairly uninspired Japanese pickup band from the early 70s, but the evangelical fury of his playing here is enough to clear the air of any bad smells. Brötzmann really pulls out the stops, moving in everything from barking big band refrains, chingly shill moves and some of his most goaded Aylerisms to date.

Peter Kowald with Barre Phillips, Barry Guy and Maarten Altena

Basse Dureté (rrp £10.99).
European improvisor Peter Kowald is a rarity, a basset capable of holding your interest even when playing alone. However, his three volumes of duets with the likes of Dave Baley, Peter Brötzmann, Diamond Galax and Andrew Cyrille attest to his love of head to head confrontation. This time out, it's bass on bass through and through. Perhaps because Baley Phillips started the low end thing rolling with the first ever solo bass album, Unaccompanied Bass (1996). The duo tracks are the most rawhaling, chugging through Kowald's bass rambles with heat and power. Barry Guy brings out some more aggressive, percussive Clark, whereas the tracks with Maarten Altena are filled with an understated air of drama. Concise track lengths ensure that none of the players exceeds their welcome.

Iris Lord And The Divine Monochord

A Rose In A Carriage (Catnapper Productions no number cd).
Playwright, pianist and singer Iris Lord made her debut at New York's Town Hall with her jazz opera *Death, Life And Artifice*, directed by Ornette Coleman. Since then she's worked with such luminaries as Ceci Taylor and James Blood Ulmer. Her voice is

spectacular, with all the mesmeric appeal of Patti Smith circa *Horses*. The trouble is her bare lyrics and her backing group's groovy mugging is a real tough going. Tracks like "Soul To Soul" are truly embarrassing with Lord glibly cooing, "Is there a soul? Yes, there's a soul! There's got to be! Don't you see?"

Joe Morris

Racket Club (rrp £10.99).

Joe Morris w/DKV Trio (rrp £10.99).
Telling (rrp £10.99).
The Racket Club sessions actually date from 1993, and since then (Boston guitarist) Joe Morris's playing has really put on a lot of meat. On sessions like 97's *Antonine* on AUM Fidelity or his duo with pianist Matthew Shipp on *Kat Hüt*, his lines contain the spare, emotional economy of Ornette Coleman with a fluid, crystal clear technique that holds the microtonal potential of human breath. Here, with two drummers, two saxophones and an electric bass, Morris finds himself too often relegated to a supporting role, forced into awkward repeat patterns of note propping. Then's still tons of punchy joy to be had when he claws his way out of the big band muck, but sometimes he submerges for too long between bouts. The DKV Trio sessions, from '98, are much more hair-raising. Morris takes on tenorist Kent Vandermark, drummer Hamid Drake and bassist Kent Kessler in a variety of combinations that leave plenty of room for his speedy firework to snake and spin.

Nimpérigin

Second (CD) (rrp £10.99).

Nimpérigin are a duo featuring trumpeter Greg Kelley and soprano saxophonist Webb Rainey. The pair evidently enjoy the company of Jason Lescalleen's tape loops and percussions, opened up by Kelley's trumpet to reveal the orchestral conceptions of Bill Dixon, minus his frosty intonations. Rainey teases slight, almost electronic sounding overtones from his soprano, which rise and fall with the mesmeric gravity of Nurse With Wound's tone symphonies. When both players catch up with each other from out of

the thick silence the effect is invigoratingly out. Second CD stands out as an epic of widescreen American beauty.

Ken Vandermark's Sound In Action Trio

Design In Time (rrp £10.99).

DKV Trio (rrp £10.99).
Chicago (rrp £10.99).
Ken Vandermark has been one of the key catalysts in getting the new jazz across to a generation of kids weaned on hardcore and avant rock. At this stage his back catalogue is already monstrous, but these two new CDs are indispensable. *The Sound In Action* trio teams Vandermark with two trap drummers his regular sideman Tim Huws and Rosen Barry, a drummer with a great pedigree who remains a shadowy presence on the more meaty scenes. Barry actually played on the first ever recordings by Sun Ra's Arkestra and hooked up with them on and off throughout the 70s. His playing alongside Huws on *Design In Time* is so powerful and precise that the pair sounds like one drummer with eight limbs as they tackle such freedom-tracks as Ayler's "Angels" and Ornette Coleman's "Peace". Vandermark's DKV Trio with Hamid Drake and Kent Kessler play with Hayes free throughout *Live In Wels* & *Chicago*.

Christian Wolffarth & Donat Fisch

Circlé & Lutz (rrp £10.99).
Pic of the bunch this month comes courtesy of the Swiss duo of saxophonist Donat Fisch and drummer Christian Wolffarth. *Circlé & Lutz* is a fantastic collection of miniatures: loose improvisations, set eyed ballads, and joyous undances. Fisch's bouncing rock tempos boast the same logic as Sonny Rollins, combining earthy street knowledge with complex esoteric patterns. Drummer Wolffarth matches him blow for blow with loose-limbed boop patterns and moody cymbal work. Tracks like "Orbit" take things deeper into breathy late night atmospherics with some ominously circling tones and light urban honks. J.J.

CORNELIUS TREATISE



Music with a spade. A spade with backbones. Vertebrae: a composite line around which the body's skeleton congregates. Spinal column: the concrete concept on which the alleged (concept) spines is founded. Or, if you prefer, the spine of the body's skeleton, the spine of perhaps Varèse's prime organizing architecture, perhaps Cardew's *Treatise* is implied with the meta-structuring agent of the phrase. Charlotte: the spachord. What is *Treatise*? Well, it's a solo chord ...

MADRIGALE



We know the measure all too well. If I love it, what does I do but repeat it? If I repeat it, what can I do but get bored with it? One answer might be to just let it: make out of its repetition something infinitely variable. This concept is the driving force behind the year's most interesting new music, and it's the driving force behind Cornelius's answer to the familiar question of what to do, musically, with the composite nature of *Treatise*, the oblique tonality of the *Præsens*, the *gentis* phase ...

FOR JOHN CAGE JOHN CAGE



Typically, as is the case in *For John Cage*, *Feldman* creates a pattern for repetition of notes under other notes, and may repeat them on unpredictable and asymmetrical number of times, until they are succeeded by the next pattern, but the pattern is never developed, it is just repeated, or it is developed in a conventional fashion. Then successive patterns are linked together in an ongoing fabric of music ...



FOR JOHN CAGE JOHN CAGE



charts

Playlists from the outer limits of planet sound

Subterraneans 15

Cola Caffe (Sub Rosa)

Sonic Youth Goodbye 20th Century (SYR)

Darin Gray & Loren MarzCane Connors The Lost Manne (Family Vinyl/epic)

ALP At Home With ALP (Solemoor)

Fly Pan Am Fly Pan Am (Consolidation)

HIP Seven Eyes (Penshable)

Pauline Oliveros & David Gansper At The Isbister (IdiO, own label)

Jack Kerouac Reeds On The Road (Rykodisc)

Bluet A Sophisticated Face (Cuneiform)

King Crimson The Projeccs (DGM)

Scratch Orchestra London 1969 (Die Stadt)

John Corbett & Heavy Friends I'm Sick Of My Hat (Avantica)

Recall Liquid (Mut)

Third Eye Foundation Little Lost Soul (Domino)

Lalika Good Talking Blues (Too Pure)

Compiled by Harry Prager. Pop Art/Philippines. De Concertzeneel, Alphen, The Netherlands. Web: www.concertzeneel.nl

Mondo Kim's 15

D'Augino Woodoo (Wing)

Kathleen Stockhausen Heliophiles-Streichquartett (Avant)

So Takahashi Ribus (Carpark)

Philip Fraizer Come Ethopians (Freedom Sounds)

David Coulter Intervention (PrimoCore)

Timelab Boated EP (Orthon Music)

Shirt Trax Good News About Space (Or)

Antipep Consortium Tragic Epilogue (75 Ark)

Various Love, Peace, And Poetry Vol. 3 (QOK Media)

Schooley D Say It Loud (Wing Resurrection)

Colin Astor Disaster (Threshold House)

Dauerfisch Crime Of The Century (Bungleone)

Grimes Personal Rock (Source)

Various Dead And Gone Vol. 1 (Tyrone)

Thomas Lehn & Gerry Hemingway Tom And Jerry (Entzündle)

Compiled by Michael Kinsella, 65 St Mark's Place, New York, USA. Tel: 001 212 538 9985. E-mail: mra@sharvideo.com

Neptune 15

Bola Sete Queen Memories (Samba Moon)

Thomas Brinkmann SuezTree (Emro)

(circle square) The Distance After (Outpost)

Vladislav Delay Ronta (Chan Reaction)

Fiona O'Berg The Magic Sound Of... (Mego)

Kraftwerk Expo 2000 EP (EMI Elektro)

Angus MacLise Invasion Of Thunderbolt Pagoda (Sternwarte/Qualibauer)

Will Oldham Ode Husic (Drag City)

Pan American 360 Business 360 Byaxis (Krank)

Royal Trux Radio Video (Drag City)

Marcus Schenck Sutor Rotas (A-Musik)

David Sylvian Approaching Silence (Vign)

Various Love Comes Shining Over The Mountain (Rune Grammofon)

Various Quotidie: Another Collection Of Modern Afro Rhythms (Cordel)

To La Tengo And Then Nothing Turned Itself Inside-Out (Matahor)

Compiled by Brett Monroy &

Michael Stipe Resurgen

Records Royal Oak, MI

USA. E-mail:

resurgen@resurgen.com

Susumu Yokota

Rectangle 15

Dragibus Rajmaka (Uplink)

Katrine Les Creatures & L'Homme A Tres Mains (Gesellschaft)

Erik Mäkinen Flame 3" CD (Metamike)

Justus Köhnecke Spralen Der Erinnerung (D1)

Van Oerlin Are You Eggspended? (Blue Chassis)

Castes 4 Executions Sommieres (Castes)

Akosh S Eller (Universal Jazz)

As Bordes Souvenirs De Paris (Winter & Winter)

Han Bennink & Derek Bailey Post Impression 1 'When We Smile (inout)

Heinzelgut To Pee (Agone)

Brightente Femtak/Streetlab Calmoro (Duophon)

Hair Desir 655 667 Club (Barday)

Dragibus Live In Japan And Little Sounds 10" (Autobus)

Derek Bailey & Han Bennink Post Impression 2 'Air Mail Special (inout)

Compiled by Neil Aitchison and Quentin Rader, Rectangle, 74 Rue

Rocher, 75009 Paris, France. E-mail: info@rectangle.org. Web: rectangle.org

The Office Ambience

Curd Bruck Behavior 3 (Mille Plateaux)

Gonzales Uber Alles (Kitty-Yo)

Ross Bolleter Left Hand Of The Universe (WARP)

Susumu Yokota Magic Thread (Leaf)

Cell Acid Disaster (Diveshod House)

Dave Douglas Soul On Soul (RCA Victor)

Einsteuernde Heusauten Silence Is Sex (Mute)

Volcaco The Bear: The Inharz Decline (United Games)

Fred Pritch Stone, Bricks, Glass, Wood, Wine (Graphic Scores)

1986-961 (Angelika)

Steve Reddmann Be Between Noise (The Radio Sonors)

The Creators Present Making The Crates Vol. 2 (Bad Magic)

Autopoleses La Via A Nove Transposed EP (Mille Plateaux)

Various The Spirit Of The Steeples (Nascent)

Gramma Personal Rock (Source)

Various Jazzauctuel (Charly)

Compiled by The Wire Sound System



PHOTO: VINCENZO DI CARO

Supposé

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Werner, Haych

Brief history First CD release in October

1996. The name Supposé is a reference to Vilen Flusser, who often started his manuscripts and lectures with the words "Supposé, que..."

("Supposed that...")

Statement of Intent To be a mixed media label in the full sense of the term, working with speech and music. We produce high quality audio CD editions of original voice recordings spoken, theory, philosophy/literature, as well as artist records and experimental electronic and non-electronic music. We also press occasional vinyl editions

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Choice up Ester Brinkmann Taxis

Rennen, BM Coran Calrix

(Bio and manifesto Klaus Sander)

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print run

New music books read, raved about, roughed up



Street smart: Eric B & Rakim

Rap Attack #3

By David Toop

SERFON'S TALE, Pbk, £14.99

Who would have thought that when *Rap Attack* was first published in 1984, 16 years later it would be in its third edition? *Rap Attack* was a landmark because it was the first book that took HipHop seriously. Where everyone else thought that it was a fad with a life expectancy, say, of the calypso waltz that followed in the wake of Harry Belafonte, David Toop subjected HipHop to the sort of rigorous analysis that rock critics were wasting on Bruce Springsteen.

Like too much of African-American culture, it took a white British guy to give HipHop the respect it deserved. Unlike most white British guys who interpret Black American music for the rest of the world though, Toop got it right. "Ten thirty pm on a cold Saturday night and three b-boys are doing their pitch near Times Square, New York City. The spectators have just paid to watch Clint Eastwood blow

away a selection of black stock-up men and multicultural rappers. They settle down to a few free moments with 'upown culture'." From the book's very first paragraph it was clear that he was fully aware of the forces of American society and his analysis of HipHop placed it firmly in the context of the Land of the Free's war on the urban poor. Perhaps more importantly, however, Toop showed that HipHop wasn't simply a novelty by studying it in a century of African-American cultural practice. Peering below its snarle-and-mirrors surface of electropunks and video game filth, he traced the roots of HipHop from James Brown and Isaac Hayes through radio DJs and Bo Diddley all the way back to double Dutch clubs and African grooves.

More than just a history lesson, *Rap Attack* captures a moment in time perfectly and there are many priceless passages. Toop's details about the Ms Pacman machines at Times Square's Playland arcade, Afrika Bambamarla's innocence ("I said, 'screw the expression, this is some weird shit'") and

Patricia Bates's amazing photo of Sequence hooking their records in *Sex, Danceera* or The Force 10s' zombie-covered in Michael Jackson stickers. In spite of all the recent Old School remissiveness, *Rap Attack* remains the definitive account of the early days of HipHop.

In 1991 *Rap Attack 2* appeared with four new chapters that covered everything that had happened since the first edition: Run DMC, Schooly D, Public Enemy, Boogie Down Productions, Eric B & Rakim, the N.W.A, Tongues pose: Hammer. The new material wasn't as detailed, but it was just as smart and shockingly. *Rap Attack 2* was not only the only decent book about HipHop but just about the only one.

Nine years later and HipHop is the biggest selling genre in the US. There has been a flood of HipHop books in the post year, but they have all come up short in one way or another. In part, *Rap Attack #3* follows suit, it only has 24 new pages covering gangsta rap, The Wu-Tang Clan, turntablism, 2Pac and,

bamboo, the 70s group warans Prophets. Whatever the reason — lack of time, lack of money, lack of interest — you can't help but feel that it's a bit of a cop out. You desperately want Toop to get more involved to sink his teeth into Master P, to unravel the mysteries of Jay-Z to engage and interrogate where so many writers take things at face value or make crass, facile jokes. Nonetheless, shamefully, it's still the best book on HipHop.

PETER SHAPIRO

Rapid Eye Movement

By Simon Dwyer

CREATION BOOKS P/BK, £17.99

Concerned and born on a London council estate on 23 January 1979, *Rapid Eye Movement* on several forms during its existence: from punk fanzine to mail art campaign and eventually a series of coffee-table volumes. It was the energies of writer and editor Simon Dwyer, however, that kept the whole project vital and relevant. An individual of strong opinions and a passionate belief in the powers of Art and Magick, Dwyer succumbed to an AIDS related illness in Brighton in 1997. This collection of his writings follows the slow process of disintegration as it manifested itself both socially and spiritually over one decade to the next. "From Atavism To Zylon B" offers a wide-ranging account of Genesis P-Orridge's career up to the time of "Goliath" and the Temple Of Psych Youth's overseas expansion, while "Through A Screen Darkly" offers a spiky portrait of PTV posterboy Derek Jarman discussing alchemy and Bronski Beat in his tiny apartment high above the Charing Cross Road. Together they offer an alternative account of the recent past which differs radically from the one handed down to us by the media.

Instead of that materialistic orgy of the cockroaches which the free-market BDs are traditionally remembered for, Dwyer celebrated the emergence of new technologies and creative forms as Psych TV got into video riffs and dance rhythms and Jarman pointed his Super 8 camera at the Soviet Union. He applauds their passing on of information "like a viral infection, one to one", pushing society into new ways of thinking and acting. Similarly "Plague Yard", his account of life in America during the early 90s, is coloured by tiny interventionist moments, such as David Hockney adjusting his hearing aid during a Puccini opera or a bar full of cross-dressing Angeles dancing to "LA Woman" by The Doors. On occasion Dwyer allows himself to go off on one, especially with regard to the parlous state of modern art. David Bowie's contribution to punk and the demise of cultural radicalism. Such provocative moments come as painful reminders of his absence.

KEN HOLLINGS

Japan Edge — The Insider's Guide To Japanese Pop Subculture

Edited by Antenne Roman
AERIAL BOOKS/PBK, \$19.95

Since the opening of its borders in the 19th century, Japan has exercised an uncanny grip upon the imagination of the West. Imagination being the key word. In the absence of specific media images beyond the usual faceless economic warior myths and wacky robot tank fantasies, the country is still a virtual tabula rasa on which the West is free to inscribe its fantasies. Macromedia, Zen, paradise, sexually liberated playground, or the SF future vision of a neon-streaked Technoparadise captured on Japan Today's cover, the fantasies are broad in their scope. But while the Tokyo government still insists on exporting only the cultural stereotypes of a tourist brochure real Japan of the tea ceremony, geisha and sumo-wrestling, the breadth of Japanese subculture has been quickly adding to the trade imbalance. If anything, the covert penetrations of Japanese popular culture has increased in recent years, with crazes for computer games Pokeman and Tamagotchi Driven by this unofficial trade, perceptions of Japan are slowly beginning to change.

Japan Edge attempts to provide an introduction to the confluence myriad forms of four decades' worth of obsessive subcultural production by concentrating on live music, animation, anime, cult film, noise, other music and manga. Each chapter, by a different specialist, provides a brief historical overview, an extended essay on the author's involvement with his or her topic, and some pointers towards where to begin with the vast amount of material currently available. The authors, including Chaz Baudish, Jason Haze and Ongaku Guru editor Jason Horn on noise and Can't Guess Horn on anime, are all committed collectors and documenters of their chosen genre. The chapters are split up with lengthy diary entries on a recent trip to Tokyo by Japanese-American Yuki Onki (who also pens the alternative music chapter) and concluded with a somewhat inconclusive round-table discussion.

The book makes no pretence at providing a neutral dispassionate account of Japan's myriad subcultures. Rather, each author relates their personal enthusiasm to an American context. The section on anime places Horn's growing interest against a highly selective 80s and 90s US political and cultural history. In the music section Onki compares early '70s rocker Yusu Inoue's *Blue Seal* to Britpop Come Alive. The methodology produces some quite fascinating dividends, especially in the case of Onki a Japanese-American and the Hispano-American film correspondent Patrick Meola. Long used to finding a balance between cultures, they are uniquely placed to comment on a culture which has always absorbed and transformed outside influences.

Some nagging concerns: the breadth of each section (Jones's relatively complete chapter on

noise aside) means that the selection can never be anything more than personal, and it might have been nice to have included a native Japanese commentator to add another perspective. Still this is an accessible and useful introduction which also provides a wealth of addresses and URLs to get lost in.

ALAN CUMMINGS

The Essential Jazz Records Vol 1: Ragtime To Swing

By Max Harrison, Charles Fox and Eric Thackier
MAMILLI PBK, \$25

The Essential Jazz Records Vol 2: Modernism To Postmodernism

By Max Harrison, Eric Thackier and Stuart Nicholson
MAMILLI PBK, \$25

Guides to recordings are always enjoyable, if you accept that shaped desire at certain inclusions or omissions can be as pleasurable as cogency. In their introduction to the latest volume of *The Essential Jazz Records*, Max Harrison and Stuart Nicholson insist that it is primarily "a book about music" and only secondarily a record guide. They view it as an account of an art form, so that provocative word "essential" assumes for weightier significance than when attached merely to a review-driven guide. Volume 1, first published in 1984 and now back in print, has come to seem a classic of its kind, and it remains pre-empted in conceptual formality unparallelled by the advent of the compact disc. 250 vinyl masterpieces are listed for the benefit of those with patience and the resources to track them down. But even in Volume 2, the editors "have not been unduly concerned with what is currently obtainable in the shops or even with availability on CD". This is a declaration of the connoisseur's integrity to be sure, but it surely runs the risk of sterility when the commentary and analysis can't be readily applied to the music. Perhaps this dogged attitude will serve as a salutary jolt to galvanise recalcitrant record companies into appropriately magnanimous action, and will open some sealed vaults.

Harrison, Nicholson and their late collaborator Fox and Thackier unquestionably write with the authority of informed and insightful insiders. Nicholson's appreciation of Anthony Braxton's *Needs Work* on Dave Holland's *Conference Of The Birds*, for example, is entirely appropriate. However, the limitations of their brand of historical orthodoxy can be gauged from the fact that it admires Braxton as leader only for his sprightly convincing in *The Tradition: Sun Ra* whose importance is beyond dispute, given address with the 1980 live set, *Sunrise In Different Dimensions*, which is fine but hardly essential, even within his own oeuvre. Thackier observes that this recording "isn't spacious enough as it is for most of us, is one

of the more earthbound of Sun Ra's scenarios". With the new volume, the compilers have ventured onto the precariously relativistic terrain of the postmodern, yet their faith remains that jazz has "a central identity" which can be salvaged from experimental crossroads and revisionist histories. In their introduction to Volume 2, Harrison and Nicholson conceive this main stem in terms of a tree maturing and spreading its branches, yet nurtured by increasingly resentful roots. You don't have to invoke Deleuzian rhizomes to recognise this as a disconcertingly old-fashioned and intrinsically reductive metaphor. That the tree is identified as an oak compounds the sense that a very British mode of constraint jazz history is being endorsed here as the essential tradition.

Still, the editors are not averse to citing Andre Hainaut and his notion of the museum without walls when explaining their method. They argue that "vapid generalisation" is so difficult to achieve that they "have repeatedly tried to subvert chronology and stylistic unity". This is no up to a point. The William Breuer Kollektiv appears under the heading "The Big Band Surfers" along with Woody Herman and Dizzy Gillespie, both of whom recorded four decades earlier. Billy Bang and George Lewis feature in "New Textures" section that also includes Claude Thornhill and, of course, Gil Evans. An effort has clearly been made to offer more flexible and inclusive generic categories than are usually found in jazz histories, but, despite such strategies for subverting chronology, the volumes do trace a lineage from ragtime to postmodernism, from the "Savannah Syncopators" (entry number one) at the root of that tree, to Peter Apfelbaum and The Herapholics Ensemble (entry number 500) in its upmost branches.

Unlike reference books such as Richard Cook and Brian Morton's *Penguin Guide To*

Jazz On CD which are arranged alphabetically by artist, *The Essential Jazz Records* embeds individual musicians within the story of the music. Cook and Morton's judgments seem seriously considered yet fitfully personal. On the other hand, Harrison and his colleagues, although they acknowledge that their choice of recordings is "obviously highly selective" appear motivated by a more detached compulsion to assign importance to certain recordings, according to their vital role in "loosening the jazz organism".

A strength of *The Essential Jazz Records* is that its format allows the editors to justify and glorify their selections in some length: the two volumes together run to nearly 1500 pages. If readers at times find themselves withholding agreement, they can at least garner useful details from this thoughtful and thought-provoking commentary. Harrison in particular is an expert in provocation as well as education. He departs the lumber of critical misunderstanding surrounding major musicians and rebukes lesser players for their shortcomings. Albert Ayler and Ornette Coleman are hailed as free jazz masters, but British free improv's god, short shrift. Derek Bailey is marginalized as an "arcane visionary" and Arcana's *Art Of The Testimony* is included rather than that group's more memorable *The Lost Movie* which featured Bungle More starting, given the genealogy of his playing, is the omission of Evan Parker except as a participant on Peter Broennimann's *Machine Guri*. He surely merits more generous inclusion if only as a foot-gag afflicting the sturdy oak. These are perhaps predictable grouchings, detracting little from the book's fulfillment of its declared task, but where is Carle Bley? Keith Jarrett? Sun Ra? Miles Westbrook? Plenty to enjoy then.

JULIAN COWLEY



multi media

Rob Young enters the sound gallery at N01se and Audible Light

over an acoustic guitar with salt and pluck the strings, the salt forms itself into distinct geometrical shapes. A visual medium acts as a direct register of some, and therefore physical, information. Two exhibitions in the university towns of Oxford and Cambridge, N01se at Kettle's Yard and Audible Light at MIMA and Camerimage at the Whitewall Galleries, highlight the tendency of an increasing amount of contemporary art and sound sculpture to act as filter systems for information. British art curators appear to be waking up to the possibilities of sound related art forms. *Live In Your Head*, a retrospective of early 70s conceptual art at East London's Whitechapel Gallery, has as share of musical input CLOUT Transmissions, classic pem mag intervention via a Cocteau Twins tune centrepiece is one of the highlights, as well as some extraordinary photos of a Genesis P-Orridge shamanic self-mutilation performance in front of a formic audience at a German festival, and a selection of poster designs by the French concrete poet Henri Chopin. All of which paves the way for the forthcoming large retrospective at London's Hayward Gallery. Sonic Boom curated by Wim Wenders, David Toop, which opens at the end of April.

Debated across three museums in Cambridge (also at the Welcome Trust's Two 01 Gallery in London), London, N01se displays various artistic technologies being utilised as visual or sonic registers to encode and display information. Joe Banks' *Disinformation's Antennae Grid* is familiar from his Art International releases, but here his antenna is installed in St Peter's Chapel adjoining Kettle's Yard. Despite the reduced volume issue to the 11th century building's shaky foundations, it's a perfect resonating chamber in which to trounce out to the internal background hum of the UK's electricity grid. Confronted with a visceral throbbing of the nation's electric backbone, Banks points out, its strategic importance has caused it to be placed on 'amber state of vigilance' during times of national difficulty such as the 1974 energy strike. The underneath pulse attains the magnitude of life essence.

Banks also exhibits the results of his parallel research into the sinewave. In a telepathic symbiosis entitled *The Line Of Grace 2000* a finely tuned electroscope produces a particularly sensuous DNA spiral that shimmers from side to side like a belly dancer's curly hips. Banks connects this with the 'line of grace' motif in the works of William Hogarth, suggesting the sinewave as a form of absolute beauty. Elegancy is thus restored to its origins as a natural phenomenon: the insurance

broker's act of God.

DNA spirals also enter the framework of *Synchronic*, a tapestry by Paul Miller (DJ Spooky on a needle tip). *Synchronic* takes its triple-layered pattern from sources including African weaving and wave amplification software which Miller has been collaborating on with African fractal author Ron Eshel. New York trumpeter Ben Neely's collaborative sculpture with photographer Bill Jones is inspired by the genetic theorist Dr Merrill Garrett, and reflects his interest in 'works of art that aren't centred in the creator's ego'. *Pulse* is a synaesthetic work featuring coloured plastic light-sensitive teenagers. Flickering as they react to the sounds of a drum machine and computer, the light and patterning percussion mesh in a way that engages the faintest corners of the eye, something like the retina-searing emergency lights of vehicles at a crash scene.

N01se spills into the realm of digital imaging, from the earliest photographs of sandcastle activity in cloud chambers to the latest digital relief mapping techniques which Manuel Francisco and Sven Nubel use to recreate anything from the earth's surface to the interior of a prehistoric cave. As you dash



▲ *Line Of Grace* from Kettle's Yard to the Whipple Museum of the History of Science. There's not so much to distinguish the art space from the technical museum. Kettle's Yard, for example, contains not only a section of Charles Babbage's Victorian Difference Engine – commonly taken as the origin of the computer – but a picked slice of Babbage's brain itself. The Whipple, meanwhile, is running a selected loop of trippy visuals created as synaesthetic sensory experiments in the late 1960s: part pure maths, part psychedelic lightshow, part *Op* an disorientation. The entire sprawling scope of N01se is documented in a well-produced companion book of essays and images.



Carlton Nicola's *Atoms*.

Below: *Disinformation's Line Of Grace 2000*

Audible Light, at Oxford's Museum of Modern Art, focuses on six artists working with sound and concrete matter, including several names familiar to *Wire* readers. Entering the white space via the foyer, you are confronted by Bruce Gilbert and Graham Lewis's *Atoms*, a bell ringing silently away to itself in a soundproofed cabinet. CM Von Hausswolff (Haller) the member and part of the monasticity of Esgland-Vargaland exhibits *Domestic Grid Flow*, an electric feedback system involving a bulb-like glowing hotplate, TV set and various hi-fi devices channelled together. Like Röster-Nötsch's *Carlton Nicola* (whose *Aroma (Brooch)* is exhibited elsewhere in the gallery), this piece demonstrates how sound equipment can filter and transform electroacoustic effects or fields of power. Like the lid with the salty guitar, Nicola's two laboratory tanks of water project waves and ripples on the floor, shaped and altered by the vibrations emanating from nine floor-mounted speakers gently rumbling. One of the most sublime sound experiences visible at either show, *Atoms* is simplicity itself: the only piece that feels like it's been running for an eternity, and will run for an eternity long after you've left the room.

Tomas Grönlund (from the Finnish Sainio label) and Peter Neuner's magnificently tri-ell

installations riff on the notion of the monitoring of public space. Around the largest space in the gallery, the duo has arranged six large satellite dishes, converting the whole room into a giant whispering gallery that feeds back the sounds and conversations of the viewers. Foregrounding the paranoid inherent in films like *The Conversation*, and drawing your attention to the increased serenity of eavesdropping and monitoring devices in the public domain, Grönlund's piece provided the most interactive interest in the show – although you have to wait for the room to empty of onlookers before its feedback system got properly up to speed.

That an magazine such as *Wire* could devote much of a whole issue to sound and electronic music, and did last year, signals that a lack of dynamic in painting and sculpture has led art spaces towards a commercial impasse. If that means the importance of sonics in modern art is up for reassessment, that's all to the good. □ *Audible Light* runs until 19 March at Oxford MIMA (www.moma.org.uk); N01se runs until 26 March at Cambridge's Kettle's Yard (www.kettlest.org.uk) and *Disinformation's Line Of Grace 2000* until 19 May at London Two 01 Gallery (www.welcome.ac.uk). *Live In Your Head* runs on 2 April at London Whitechapel Art Gallery (www.whitechapel.org).

GO TO:



©YALE

orang-orang.org

Orang [Open Radio Active Network Group] is part of an art project started in Berlin in 1996 called Radio International City. Designed to give independent artists a chance to publish audio material on the Net, Orang has now developed into a massive, searchable virtual library. Most musical genres are represented (it's especially heavy on electronica, inevitably), as well as radio art, cultural debates, lectures, and political reports all archived as Real Audio files. Material tends to be mostly in German, but minor servers have been set up in London and Canada. Browse the latest entries, search for a specific artist, or look through the playlists of DJs like A-Musik's Georg Ojik or Monika's Gurut Guta. The art section includes sound files from Nicolas Collins and radio works from Wim van Oeffelt.

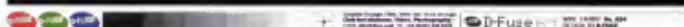


Bash The Trash

»di net-parties

Ever wanted to learn all that jazz packaging to good use and become an experimental musician at the same time? Look no further. *Bash: The Trash* will get you started in the alchemical transformation of garbage-to-music in no time. Founded in '97 by one John Bentles, this site is mainly designed for parents and schoolteachers wanting to teach children a thing or two about litter. When Bentles stumbled on a club called Music For Homeless Instruments, he joined immediately and contributed to their CDs *Decade Of Debris* and *Art Of The Litter*. The *Funnestolites*, *Pot Gang* and *Happy New Year* *Straw Rosemeyer* are just a few of the instruments featured on their performances in and around the New York and New Jersey areas.

ANNE WILDE NESSET



on location

Going live: festivals, concerts, clubs in the flesh



Magma's Christian Vander

Magma

UK: London: Queen Elizabeth Hall

Gathered round the middle-aged Christian and Stella Vander, the youthful cohort of Magma's latest incarnation is naturally nervous. They look like French exchange students, but they act like the remnant of a 13th century tribe which has somehow sloped through a tear in the space-time continuum. They offer up music from a dim, distant past: the dark ages themselves. 1975. For three hours, they have to keep up with the master, the troll-like Christian Vander, his body warped by years behind the drum. They stammer in tongues – that is, Vander's emotionally charged, linguistically dubious Kobain. They play with an intensity and focus that threatens to lift the roof off!

Cliche is turned inside out and within a short time (20 minutes to warm up, which is a very short time in a Magma gig), the audience is being sucked into a black hole: it is part: "strange basement so&t, part scary paper" ritual – not people banging a metal bowl with a stick for half an hour and passing it off as something deep, but a genuinely weird ritual concerned with the formal opening up of time, the display of something hidden. But what? Wounds? Taboo? Something more than a mobile ring or a mobile phone pouch, surely? The audience here is called to witness and to participate in the raising of a psychic monument, to help realise an altered state they know is out of reach. It is the South Bank Centre, after all. But they try nevertheless, egged on to engage in an act of sheer will. It's a long haul. The three suites each last 45 minutes or more, each one a precisely timed feast of engineering that proves at once oppressive and inspiring. At moments you just want it to stop, at others the music seems to project so far into the future that every change in tempo, signalled usually by one of Vander's minutely measured thwacks on the snare or the hi-hat, resounds as an apocalyptic summons. Magma's music is architectural, physically palpable. In "Theus Hamsoek" the group locks into a groove, the momentum of which seems to build before your eyes a vast tower of solid granite which then prises apart. "Wurda! Iuli!" is Brueghel pastoral, a Bacchanalian dance around a maypole in a warm sunset clearing. Stella takes the podium, warbles and trills over the pounding din, and it's as if Cleo Lane had accidentally wandered into *The Wicker Man*. Even the fittest of souls would be moved. But you'd have to have a heart of stone not to laugh. "Mekanik-Destrueur Kommando" opens with madly sinister cadences, felicit as a series of palpable jabs in a thousand sweating guts. The room shudders. The group attempts to create time pure and simple, then diverges

into a jazz fusion jam session designed to let the youngsters show us their skills, before the old ones behind the kit draw them back in and the four singers come to the front of the stage to show us to the climax.

Wander is not only a Rawlings drummer of great energy and style, he is overwhelmingly confident in his aesthetic. He displays apparently simple elements and stripped down rock instrumentation to great dramatic effect — though, unlike their last London show, there's no Lost City backdrop and (sadly) no singers dressed in gigantic insect masks. Except for Sun Ra and a few low-cutters, in terms of vision the rest are mere poseuses, whined notes flapping uselessly in a tornado. Even Wander is finally let down in little by a group incapable of entirely absorbing themselves in the drama/going, so busy are they in following the tensely tight twists and turns of the arrangements that he dances along with outre grimaces, Rebetzian gestures and animal-magnetic passes from behind the kit. Uniquely, perhaps, he puts his finger on an existential G-spot: the point at which the sacred, the aesthetics, and the meaningless coincide. If at times it sounds like religious music, “practicing or Gospel” the ditty it evokes is sexual physical and evidently so different that it has to be coaxed into revealing itself. Nothing could be more absurd, more prone to failure. How much easier to梧ue about the mind's fate in the confusion of postmodernism, to celebrate the self, to noodle through a life last on hold with the Jimmy-on-head music ringing in your ears for ever. Playing a maze of contradictions, the geometry of which describes the human mind. Lew-Strauss meets Carl Dill, raps about Coltrane. Their sights are raised towards the transcendental. What they do is make Art.

So there you have it: all those toothy wideboys bopping about shambling, the pale-faced quasi-religious genii selling their spirituality to earnest bank clerks, the avant-pop posers self struggling with modernism and mortgages, the one-track duds and their Goth groups calling the kettle black, the tyro virtuosos belling the 20th century off their

transporter's lists, the social workers beating in the shadow of the old folks' home, the kooky neoclassical wannabes dragging on the exhausted rag end of jazz the weirdly medieval chanteuses begging for a Bill & Ted revival as they burble at the Biarritz Evening Supper — all included as a fiftysomething French couple playing Progressive rock. Magic.

ED BAXTER

New York Festival of Electronic Composers and Improvisors

USA. New York Knitting Factory

New York City, as every artist knows, is a pre-arrival town in which every performance has to be carefully sited, even the slightest change of venue north can cause its Greenwich Village audience to rule it an uptown event, and pass on it. All the more remarkable, then, that the Whitney Museum (way up town) and the boho Knitting Factory (way downtown) found a way to coordinate a pair of sound arts events. At the American Century exhibition, the Whitney set aside a gallery for listening to almost 100 American electronic sound works. Titled *Am String In A Room*, after Alvin Lucier's famous piece, it unfortunately drew attention to the fact that sitting in a slightly darkened gallery listening to records, is not all that exciting. But it was something.

The downtown live performances at the Knitting Factory thus took on even greater importance. The first evening began inauspiciously with an unpronounced, longish video of Cluster's performance at the Knit several years before. It had little bearing on the night's events, except that its fixed camera positions and slow pans across hands slowly turning knobs underlined just how visually deadening electronic performances can be (a Prissiane observation, but true).

The unannounced first performer (but then, they were all unannounced, weren't they?) was guitarist David Grubbs, late of Squirrel and Gastr Del Sol, who played several



Pauline Oliveros

pleasant solo pieces whose electronic elements were understated to the max. Morton Subotnick followed on stage, pedaled a laptop on his backpack, seated himself at a table, and discovered the mouse wasn't working no matter. He explained that we would hear a work in progress, his 20th Quarter with a poem on CD-ROM, which could be mixed and varied by the speed and motion of yes, the mouse. The mousepad on the computer worked nicely, however, and the strings were sent from hundreds of soaring transformations.

Tony Conrad can always be counted upon for some Rausch fun, and this night found him shaving with an electric razor while baring on a contact mic. Not exactly Stockhausen's *Helicopter String Quartet*, but amazing nonetheless. The principal part of his performance was an immensely reedied small figure on the violin which triggered off a variety of lo-fi oscillations. *Absolutely Old School!*

Pauline Oliveros closed the evening by setting herself into a chair with her Just-tuned accordion and produced the first stunning sonics of the night. Helped by her Deep Listening buddy, guitarist Stephen Vitiello (the curator, incidentally, of the Whitney sound art exhibition), a wall of sound seemed to emerge from everywhere, most of it undetectable except that somewhere underneath there was always the faint reassuring wheeze of metal reeds.

It occurred to me outside that just a few blocks further down the street was La Monte Young, whose absence from this festival was startling. But perhaps even the Knit was too far upriver for him.

The festival programme stopped just short of debunking electronica hype by pointing out that phrases such as “the next big thing” and “the future of music” were assigned to a genre that was by no means a new arrival. They are

have stopped short of pointing out that “electronic music” isn't a genre either — just as “music played on guitars” is not a genre — but that's the point at the festival itself demonstrated that quite nicely.

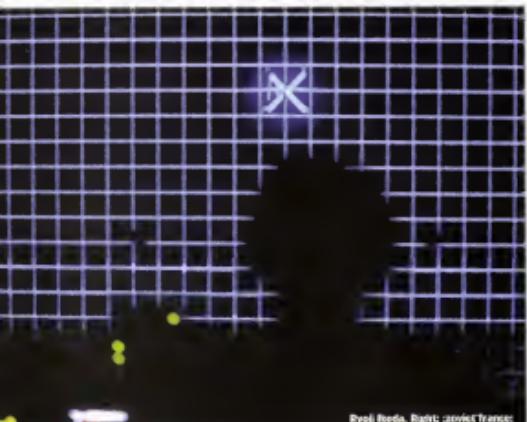
The second night opened with Dutch's, the project of DJ Joseph Frado, who intends the name to reflect both information and spirit. Although Frado's pleasant post-techno missile could have held up fine on its own for this performance he teamed with a dancer and performance artist. He pitched and rolled in a manner sometimes mad, sometimes sexual, sometimes funny, sometimes grotesque, sometimes merely gaudy — but at all times commenting on the relationship of the human body to sounds that originated as dance music and have often outgrown that function. As the energy of the performers started high, they gradually flagged and outlasted their welcome — and their ideas — by quite a few minutes.

Next up, without much fanfare, veteran composer and sometime prankster Alvin Curran calmly beat one of the festival's best performances. With *Winged And Puff*, a size-specific piece drawing on samples of years of Knitting Factory performances. For regulars, this could easily have become a guessing game, but Curran was too smart for that — shimmering, billowing, possibly-born squawlies, speaking voices, rock sports and waives of noise left their initial jinginess in the dust and merged into a graceful, balanced composition with a dizzying array of associations. Themes seemingly long abandoned manifested themselves again with startling and perfect timing. Sounds of nature, both rural and urban, intervened, reminding us that tranquility can exist in any space (no easy feat in this hot, crowded sold-out night).

After the Elliott Sharp's solo Tectonics performance was mildly anticlimactic. His



PHOTOS: PETER SAGET



Ryoji Ikeda. Right: zoviet*france;

Like little guitar-computer works are always pleasurable both to hear and watch but after Currier's rich, warm and adventurous soundscape Sharp's playing was comparatively lacking in communicative resonance. In fact, Sharp came closer than any of the strict computer/sampler players to embracing the stereotype of a techno-geek who focuses on his machines themselves at the expense of how the machines can be used. He's transcended that in the past, particularly when playing with collaborators who challenge him, but here he wasn't surprising anyone, much less himself.

There weren't a lot of surprises in the night's final set either: a trio of percussionist Charles K. Noyes, harpist Zeena Parkins and Jim O'Rourke on Powerbook—but no other set demonstrated so clearly that the supposed opposition between electronic music and, well, the other kind is a bit spurious. The success of group improv rests upon the interactions between the players, and that is true no matter which instruments are used. Though the set started with some getting-acquainted farts and fumbles, the trio found its footing quickly and proceeded to raise the ante consistently, all the way to the end. O'Rourke and Parkins share an appreciation of the playful, the flamboyant, the seemingly perverse, while Noyes fitted happily in the background for quite a while before asserting himself with immediate timing. The supposed lack of visual interest that electronic music can suffer didn't hold water here either. O'Rourke's face was a constantly changing vista of concentration, frustration and delight. Parkins's manner of approaching and driving starting sounds from her tall electronic harp made her by default a dancer as well as a musician.

JOHN SEWSD/MONICA KENDRICK

Images of digits twirling around shot up the screen like a waterfall of numbers in reverse. The passage between musical episodes was marked by intense white flashes that lit up the auditorium. The link between images and music was close and intelligent—as the range of inference in the music grew wider, so the visuals began to depart from abstraction and include fleeting images. It was a powerfully physical event, probing the effect on the body of visual and sonic repetition and sucking the spectator into a vibrant monotone world. While this aspect of the show was intensely private, the feeling of exposure to such large sounds and images gave the music a sense of group movement. It was more of a collective experience than is usually possible in such an auditorium.

Long-time lurkers on the fringes of experimental electronics, zoviet*france's reputation has grown with their longevity (they've released around 20 albums to date). Their live appearances are rare, and there was a palpable air of anticipation in the crowd. They performed from the stage, sitting on the floor in changing pools of deep colour. Their music was built up with processed input from both electronic and acoustic

zoviet*france: +

Ryoji Ikeda

UK: London Queen Elizabeth Hall

A surprisingly large crowd turned up at the South Bank to see a double bill trumpeted as "the unmissable sonic and visual experience of the year". It was odd programming: the clear tones and spaces that mark out the terrain in Ikeda's minimal sine-poetry are quite a distance from the smeared palettes of outsider electronica pioneers zoviet*france. It certainly turned out to be an evening of distinct halves.

Facing up was Ikeda, who sat behind the mixing desk in the middle of the auditorium in a pale green pullover (ikeda is unusual among electronic musicians in that he treats his compositions as if they were built to last). These are not pieces to be discarded or endlessly remastered, but carefully sculpted works that bear a little repetition. He began with "Headphones", a piece he started working on in 1995. It's perhaps the purest example of his work, constructed from very simple tones, some at the extremes of audible range and beyond, with loops of great simplicity layer over each other to create an extremely affecting, interlocked mesh of machine noises. Unfortunately, in the basest places it was too loud and the speakers couldn't handle the tones—the crisp edges of the recorded version were lost in the mud. The video for this opening section was correspondingly simple. X and Y axes flashing across a huge dark screen with a pulsing point at its centre. It was utterly mesmerising. (The lighting design and video were the work of other members of the Japanese Dumb Type collective, who performed last year at the Barbican.) Ikeda then moved into "A".



instruments. Sadly, the best of the evening was already past. As the music ground slowly onward, it became apparent that it was simply not finding its feet—in fact, it was never going to find them. We watched and waited and waited and watched. Nothing came along. A huge range of sounds were incorporated into the mix, from gurgling water to bass drum. And that's where the problem lay: it sounded vague, diffuse and aimless, especially in comparison to the concentration and clarity that Ikeda brought to his sound constructions. zoviet*france held out the promise of a richer experience, but this wasn't it. In the end it was hard to salvage anything from the morass. The accompanying video did nothing to relieve the boredom: the clichés piled up—rapping shots of swimming pool lanes, an escalator, rootless folk at a radio station. I've seen more experimental TV ales.

All that remained was for the evening to fizzle out with a brief and pointless collaboration between the two acts.

WILL MONTGOMERY

Sundays In The Dream House: Two Memorial Concerts

USA: New York Mela Foundation

If you're concerned with alternative histories of modern music (and who isn't these days?), sooner or later you're bound to encounter La Monte Young. His own excursions into drones, sound environments, sustained noise and just intonation have influenced everyone from The Velvet Underground to Soundlab DJs, but you won't find his music in the racks at Tower or Virgin (although some of his out-of-print Gramophone releases have been commanding astronomical sums on the secondhand market). Yet he's practically a household name compared to one of his closest friends of the 60s—electronic composer Richard Maxfield and saxophonist/composer Terry Jennings. Maxfield is somewhat known for his peace Night Music, which opened the classic David Iffman-produced New Sounds in Electronic Music compilation on Odyssey, and one album on New World. Jennings never got anywhere near a studio, and although championed by folks like Cornelius Cardew, John Tilbury and Harold Budd in his time, he's been largely forgotten since. Both men died in their early forties in 1969 and 1981 respectively, and Young has periodically presented concerts of their work, of which these were the most recent.

As John Cage's replacement as electronic music teacher at the New School, Maxfield was a well-known character in the NYC avant-garde of his day (many of the founders of Fluxus met each other in his class), and old-guard figures like Jackson MacLow, Charlemagne Palestine and Ira Cohen were in attendance. The concert opened with a live performance of 1962's *Perspectives For La Monte Young*, which found Young and cellist Charles Curtis seated on the floor, bowing a contrabass and a cello laid in front of them, producing the sort of sustained sordid mess many listeners would associate with Xenakis or AMM. They were joined by Maxfield's cut-up tape of Young doing along friction sounds at the time. The tape is brilliantly assembled, with each noise crashing into the next, creating a sense of raw energy and evincing Maxfield's enthusiasm for the material; in fact, the live accompaniment proved distracting. Joseph Kubera performed *Piano Poco For David Tudor* next, which appears on the *Advance* LP but is much better experienced live. Kubera had been personally taught the piece by Tudor some years ago, and he gamely crawled under the piano, tucked at the instrument with a hammer, pulled a chain through the support bars underneath, and dropped tidywhips on the strings. Again, the tape stole the show, another careerising assemblage of friction sounds that holds up much better four decades down the line than the piano abuse (which does retain a sort of kinky charm).

After an intermission, several of Maxfield's electronic and tape pieces were played, mostly from 1958-59. Both *Sine Music* (a



DAVID LEAR (left) has travelled over the ocean and across the world to explore water wind and insect sounds. His unique departure from the usual musical connotations of synthetic composition. There is a playfulness to the choice of sound sources (Cough Music features the spluttering edited out of a tape of a Christian Wolff concert, Steven Huse comes or clanging reedbox) but they are manipulated beyond recognition, keeping the joke out of the music.

Over the course of three hours, this concert provided a strong sense of Feldman's qualities as a composer: extremely discriminating about selection of sounds and their placement despite the use of aleatoric techniques as a starting point (he used to cut tape up and place the pieces in a mixing bowl, then painstakingly assemble them at random but reject any sounds he didn't like) and passionately drawn to

the most hair-raising sounds available but also to the recreation of natural surroundings. Above all, there's a manic directness to the pieces — you get the feeling that he'd bypassed the geeky or academic avenues of electronic music and headed immediately for the choicer sounds armed with a formidable technique.

Equally masterful was California tenor Jerry Jennings, whose powers as a saxophonist and composer are sadly unheralded 40 years after his NYC debut, which occurred during Young's legendary concert series at Yoko Ono's Chambers Street loft. The proportions of the Dream House's memorial evening were even more epic than for *Marfield*, lasting more than two hours. The programme opened with a 30 minute tape of that long concert, including a brief, incredibly delicate piece for two saxophones (consisting of three separate sustained two-note intervals) played by Young and Jennings, and then a set of piano pieces. The piano works are superficially comparable to Morton Feldman, but marked by tremendous fragility and more of a sense of poesy. Each is quiet, constructed from simple intervals which dissolve into silences, inviting careful listening and a heightened awareness of tonal identity. The pieces were then played live by Kubera, Young and Michael Schumacher, each giving a different slant on Jennings's own performances. Kubera gave a relatively straight run through, while Young's languid take, full of long silences, had real emotional depth. Song in A followed, which again featured Schumacher at the piano and some deft cello improvising by Curtis.

This made for a nice transition to the second half of the concert, which featured tapes of Jennings's solo piano and started with a rare tape of *Piano For Cells And Saxophone* with Charlotte Moorman. A series of modal improvisations over changing drones, it's an early and towering example of tape-influenced Western composition. Usually lasting at least an hour, this was something of a mad dash at under five minutes, but a valuable document of how Jennings played it. A series of 1961 duets between Young (on piano) and Jennings followed, with Youngounding out hyper-attenuated blues patterns that might less even John Lee Hooker's. His tone was bell-like and heroic, and his quicker solos referenced bebop, twelve-tone, Romantic and Indian music nearly simultaneously. These were obviously jazz, but in some ways more radical and sophisticated than The John Coltrane Quartet's modal efforts at the time. More live performances followed, including two versions of 1965's *Winter Sun* (by Kubera and Schumacher) and another fine Schumacher/Curtis duet. Winter Sun. These are more in the neo-Romantic style Jennings was to fully embrace in the 70s, and while Winter Sun is quite moving and evocative, they are not as striking as the earlier pieces. The three piano pieces were performed again for additional comparison and as a symmetrical conclusion, a bit excessive as programming but given the rarity of hearing Jennings's work, I say better to eat the side of overindulgence.

ALAN LICH

John Zorn

UK London Barbican

Zorn's back that part of his anatomy, clad in a casual red pullover over yellow-flecked combat slacks. He, in fact, what is presented to the audience for two thirds of this rare London visit. He's in composer/conductor mode for the first two sets, by his Pleiades String Trio and Bar Kokiba, seated so far at the front of the stage on the floor that he actually chivvies two latecomers into their seats just before the start of one number.

The sum of tonight's show is Zorn's group composed music — literally, music composed for a specific group of supernaturally attuned musicians, music played by and for each other. To the distant observer there's a strange coyness about Zorn at the moment: one the one hand aggressively flooring the CD market with all manner of wonderful inventive or just plain daff-morality music via his *Tzadik* and *Avant Labels*, and coming out increasingly hostile in print, against those — the media in particular — who can't understand the music the way they oughta. In person, however, he keeps his artetic mien extremely close. The vade Barbican stage is understood, all three groups are kept tightly huddled, the final Pleiades quartet are arranged in a perfect, almost obsessive bloc. There's no address to his "beloved" audience (apart from personnel introductions, all other verbal action is kept to hushed private jolts between members). Is he in danger of isolating the super-named musician once he's gathered about himself within a closed brotherhood? And of treating his audiences, whom he claims should be allowed to enjoy the music without any *Mitwieg* via secondhand received opinion or manufactured tastes in a similar about-fusion?

He probably always will, because the spirit of his music seems destined always to wander beyond reach. The mating of hyper-tight attenuated blues patterns that might less even John Lee Hooker's. His tone was bell-like and heroic, and his quicker solos referenced bebop, twelve-tone, Romantic and Indian music nearly simultaneously. These were obviously jazz, but in some ways more radical and sophisticated than The John Coltrane Quartet's modal efforts at the time. More live performances followed, including two versions of 1965's *Winter Sun* (by Kubera and Schumacher) and another fine Schumacher/Curtis duet. Winter Sun. These are more in the neo-Romantic style Jennings was to fully

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Mark Feldman walks an increasingly taut rope as he balances a gypsy triplet over what's basically a rock-beating pulse supplied by cellist Erik Friedlander and bassist Greg Cohen, set thusly sailing with the breeze. Bar Kokiba is not the house band for the latest themed watering hole downtown, but a laigh ensemble comprising some of Manhattan's best players. Sian's of the show here are percussionist Cyro Baptista — as on-the-one with the shakers and timbales as Aito — and Marc Ribot, whose tremolo guitar twang adds an electric shimmer to Bar Kokiba's lumbinous gypsy rhythm. One track in particular marches the frenetic *St. Vitus* dance of Emre Küçükçan's *Blow Cat White Cat* (Küçükçan), in which emotions turn on a knife edge and a wedding can become a walk at the twitch of a drunken trigger finger.

And finally, the UK debut of Masada. Zorn's ongoing hi-register acoustic quartet that takes its name from the mass Jewish suicide of the first century AD. Given the name's provenance you might expect tortured nose-grabs more akin to Nahid City or Panikiller, but the raw primal scream of these outlaws seems to have healed. Instead Masada is a more positive affirmation of twisted, complex identity. Dave Douglas's following trumpet incites huge lines of distance into the music, jet trails seen from the ground (Zorn's presumed home brings you closer to the engine-intruded dust). Joey Baron's shifty drumming is surprisingly backrounded, exceeding one or two grinning solo eruptions. The message were still here our Jewishness the sum of our tangled heritage and multiple personal input of the urban present. The remarkable thing about John Zorn now is that it's impossible to view the entirety of his gargantuan endeavours on the strength of one small part of it. I'm inclined to view his work as one of those unfolding Great American Novels that get written about once a year. Tonight, we see maybe a couple of chapters only.

ROB YOUNG

Back to jazz: John Zorn



PHOTO: JULY HEATH

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For more information on the No Music Festival visit: http://www.no-music.com/no_music.htm

www.no-music.com/no_music.htm

www.acadianhall.ca

www.undolive.com

www.no-music.com

www.interplay.ca

www.no-music.com

out there

March's selected festivals, live events, clubs and broadcasts



Thomas Mapfumo

UK Festivals

Afrika Roots & Shoots

With African music hotter than ever, London's Barbican gets in on the act with this 12-day festival of jazz, township jazz, ra, Malian blues and chunmuenga. Featured performers include King Sunny Ade, Niniola, Mekembe, Busi Mhlongo, Cheikh Lembete, La Bionda, Thomas Mapfumo, U-ceef, Oliver Mtukudzi and Ali Farka Toure. There will also be club nights from The Shrine, an acoustic show from Franco's former guitarist Housse Fan Fan, children's workshops and a series of films including works from Souleymane Cisse, Cheickourumar Saadou and Idrissa Ouedraogo. London Barbican, 4-15 March. Times/prices vary. Booking: 020 7638 8891

Boules 2000

The last of the London phase of the French composer-conductor's 75th birthday party features Boulez conducting The London Symphony Orchestra through Schoenberg's *Pelion And Meteora*, Beno's *Nomura* and Salvatore Sciarrino's *Recreatio Oscuro*. London Barbican, 2 March. 7.30pm. £35-£65. 020 7638 8891

PHOTO: JIM ELLIOTT

F:East

This pan-Asian festival of arts and culture takes over suburban Brixton with performances from Byron Walker, PoMo Japanese Taichi from Frank Chacko, Chinese Improv, Filigree dance, Chinese puppet theatre and a club night from Chinatown. Brixton The Bull, 6 February-10 March. Times/prices vary. 020 8449 0068

Music On Screen

25 years after the video for Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, the National Film Theatre celebrates the music promo with the month-long programme of memorable, influential and notorious videos. Featured will be clips from Bjork, Beastie Boys, Aphex Twin, Pet Shop Boys and Madonna. Sponsored director include Spike Jones, Chris Cunningham, David Fincher and Michael Gordon. London NFT, Mondays, 6-27 March. Session tickets £15/£12. 020 7928 3232. Web: [www.bjong.uk.net](http://bjong.uk.net)

Roots-Classical Fusions

The London Philharmonic's third annual Roots-Classical Fusions day seeks to find the links between classical and World Music. The day

will include the world premiere of Best Roots, a specially commissioned work by Andrew Pegger; a performance of Ligeti's Poeme Symphonique for 100 metronomes and a performance of Carlos Mompox's La Cretón De Mompox based on African creation myths. There will also be ritual dances from Keros, an ancient Castilian song cycle, bluegrass and children's workshop. London Royal Festival Hall, 4 March. £20-£15. 020 7960 4242

Kurt Weill: From Time To Time

Second leg of a cycle which began last October. HK Gruber conducts The London Sinfonietta in a selection of Weill's orchestral suites after a documentary film of his German years (2 March). Queen Elizabeth Hall from 5pm; while his Broadway period is celebrated by The London Philharmonic under Kurt Masur (29 Royal Festival Hall, 7.30pm). Info: 020 7960 4242

International Festivals

Andy Warhol: A Factory

Celebrating most aspects of the one-man culturist factory, this exhibition focuses not only on Warhol's art, but also his films and musical associations, including a performance by Tony Conrad (11 March) and Jay Gottlieb performing works by John Adams, Philip Glass, John Cage and George Antheil (15 April). Portugal: Porto Museum of Contemporary Art Sessions, 11 February-30 April. 031 22 615-6500

Linguaggi Jazz

For a month of Saturdays Tunn turns its attention from Juventus to Rome with this series of concerts. Performers include Ravi Coltrane, Wayne Horowitz 4+1, Ensemble Charlie Mariano, Norman Simmons and Tommy Ellison Italy. Tunn's Piccolo Teatro (Lucano), 14-24 March. 18 April. Web: www.piccoloteatro.com/itza

Mostly Modern Festival

A four-day free jazz and Improv festival whose highlight is the inaugural concert of The Barry Guy New Orchestra featuring Marilyn Crispell, Evan Parker, Matt Gossman, Paul Lytton, Hans Koch, Herb Robertson, Johannes Bauer, Peter Ake, Homister and Raymond Sindi. Ireland: Dublin Bank of Ireland Arts Centre, 5-8 March. Info: 00 353 1 821 6620

No Music 2000

The one and only Nihilist Space! Blend's annual three-day experimental shindig this year features the hosts alongside Lee

Ranaldo, Aube, Voice Crack, Paul Dutton, The Black Axis and Uncle Wiener. Canada: London Apolin Hall, 30 March-1 April. Web: www3.sympatico.ca/burner/nmb

Oblique La Nights

Presented by Deyan's Noise Museum label, this weekend-long festival features live electronics from FX Randomz, Vier, Schlammpezziger Scorn, David Shea & Sonner, DJ Speedranch, Janek Nose, Nose Girl, Computer Torik, Lagomero Electronica, Roger Razz, Dabber, David Toop, Paul Schutte, Third Eye Foundation and more. France: Nantes Le Leu Unique, 24-26 March. 00 33 02 40 12 14 34 e-mail: info@reverbeune.com Web: www.reverbeune.com

Other Minds Festival VI

The sixth edition of this fest of electronic is directed by electroacoustic composer Carl Stone. Under his stewardship, performers will include Leroy Jenkins, Herbie Dr. De Scamper DJ Spooky, Ali Takahashi, Christian Wolff, William Winant and Peter Gersh, ex-Kronos cellist Jean Jeannaud and Chryz Quartet. USA: San Francisco various venues, 16-18 March. 001 415 934 8134. Web: www.otherminds.org

Sounds & Film

Subtitled 'Electronic music and its visual aspects', this exhibition curated by SKRÉ focuses on the impact made by SKRÉ's electronic's Powerbook army. The exhibition will feature sound installations, computer-generated images, graphic design from electronic's leading labels, displays of equipment, a recreation of a bedroom studio and a Blueprint record stall. Austria: Vienna K'Haas, 10 March-16 April. 00 43 1 587 96 63 21. Web: www.k-haas.at

Special Events

AEON

The final piece of the Rite-of-Spring Company's trilogy concerning new materiality and virtual reality. Wayne McGregor's choreography will be accompanied by an electronic score from concertgoer Brighton Gardner Arts Centre, 17 March. 8pm. £10-£18. 01273 685861

Photos by Amy & Tanveer

Omni Tea, Freddy Fresh, Deltaplano, Justice, 5 Honey Monk, 4 Hero and David Lynch all

feature in the photographic exhibition 'Featuring the inventive music stills of Amy Robs and Tariqah Ahmed, who've been snapping for *The Wire* and other music magazines for the past three years'. London Scala, 2 March-2 April. 020 7813 2022

Principles Of Electronic Warfare

An extension of Joe Banks' *Desinformation* multimedia Blackout exhibition at the ICA (27 March-2 April) this might not be your average club night, but it will feature extreme sounds from Bruce Gilbert, Nomes, Farmers Manual and Mount Vernon Arts Lab (26), plus video works from Barry Hale. London ICA, 30 March. 020 7910 3647. Banks also detonates an electrically-tapping installation under the City of London between 25 March-16 April, founded at the Old Bailey club, London Foundry, 25 020 7613 5817

On Stage

John Adams The British premiere of the American composer's *I Was Looking At The Ceiling And Then I Saw The Sky* (an opera focusing on social and geographical rifts in LA) London Linbury Studio Theatre, 2-4 March. 7.30pm £15-£23 020 7904 4000

Appliance Ultimo post-rock from the English quartet London Drill Hall, 15 March. 7.50 £20 0892 0390

Arsenals Probably the best live Hip-Hop act around dazk the UK with their footwork, Hull Pled Side at The Wellington Club (2 March), Reading Boing Club (3), Dublin Temple Music Bar (4), Manchester Turntable (8), London Subterfuge (10) (Pompeii Go-Off (20), Brighton Phoenix (21), Nottingham Old Angel (22), Newcastle University (23), Aberdeen Gow (24), Dundee Homeless (25), Leeds Liquid (29)

Asian Dub Foundation Asian rap posse bring their sound system to the East-meets-West night, also featuring Dubcata and ADFD DJs, and live sets by Sylence Funk, Ed O'Bryan and Ambassadors Of Dub. London Scala, 18 March. 9pm-5am. £10-£20 7813 2022

Beak Studio From the midlife culture master London Wembley Arena, 23 March. £18.50 020 8902 0902

Michiel & Beatrix Braam (returning) saethoren, Ian Ballamy and drummer Martin France, the Tintanow tour includes the music of Lenine, Tristana, London Pizza Express (28 March), Leeds Wadrobe (29), London Royal Academy (30), Birmingham CBSO Centre (31)

Breakfast Tea Ron Sex, DJ Die and Lorraine Lewis live drum in bass experience. Shefield Unit, 13 March. Brighton Concorde (3)

Broadcast Vintage synth-pop whermy from Warp posters. Nottingham Heavenly Social (2 March), Leeds Duchess of York (22), Newcastle Quay Club (23), Glasgow King Tut's (24), Manchester Hop & Grape (25), Hove Old Market (27), Bristol Fleece & Fink (28), London Dingwalls (29)

LTJ Bokem + Blame + MC Conrad

Agente Jungle takes their Progressive Sessions on the road. Canterbury Kent University (1 March), Cambridge Junction (2), Liverpool Mountford Hall (3), Edinburgh Pontzow (4), Derby Union (9), Reading Student Union (10), Stoke Keele Students Union (11), Nottingham Ballroom (17), Newcastle Students Union (18), Bedford Esquires (22), Leeds Nato (23), Leicester Junctions (24), London Shepherd's Bush Empire (25)

Capitol X + Air Traffic Controllers Hale Paradise associates Capital X (locks horns with Parallel label emperor Gerald Casady's post-rock project London Upstarts at the Garage (16 March) 8pm £5 020 7909 1818 **Yiayias Day + Magpies + D** Gravé electronics from Hellenic Delight, To Rococo Ros's Stefan Schneider premieres a solo venture, Soul Stone. Lounds DJ plays the gigs. Brighton Roxy (19 March), London Notting Hill Arts Club (20)

Klepa Fursors The Brodsky Quartet, Patricia Rozario and others celebrate the Russian composer's 50th birthday London Dots Hall, 5 March. 3pm free. 020 7873 7300 **Laurenti Garage** House-Tech DJ with Gothic fire. Cambridge Junction (3) Harts Glasgow Arches (24), Sheffield Bed (25), Dublin Temple Street Theatre (26), Newcastle Students Union (30) Liverpool Bugged Out (31), London The End (1 April)

Gasped You Black Emperor + Sigur Ros + Fly Pan An everyone's favourite Cancer post-rockers on UK tour Aberdeen Lemon Tree (27 March), Glasgow Garage (28), Belfast Empire Theatre (30), Getaway Room (31), Cork Nancy Spans (1 April), Dublin HQ (2), London Royal Festival Hall (3), Bristol University (5)

Gonzales Naked disco from Kylie-Yo label's DJ along with a bevy of other spinners. London Scala, 20 March. 7.30pm £7 020 7392 9034

Kot Koala + DJ Feed + Amnon Toben Multiple deck matches from Ninja Tuna's finest Hull Wellington Club (16 March), Leeds Croop (17) Bristol Blue Mountain (18), Sheffield University (21), Newcastle University (22), Glasgow Arches (23), Manchester Hox & Grace (24) Nottingham The Bomb (25) Brighton Concourse (26), Cambridge Junction (29) London Scala (30)

Lombano All-woman chamber ensemble celebrates the rhythms of the world. London Union Chapel, 5, 12, 19 March. 5.15/6.15, 020 7359 4911 **Leopoldine** Improv quartet featuring Pat Thomas, Mick Black, Tony Buck and Reiner Kunz. Nottingham Maze (23 March), Leeds Tern Club (24), London Red Rose (28) Liverpool Bluecoat (29), Sheffield Ecclesall Non-Particular Club (30)

Kaffe Matthews Live sampling and violin soloists, with Rastafarianian and Lucy And The Porettes in support. Dublin Arthouse (9 March), Barn 00 353 87 650 8581 **Negative Entropy + Nertia + Opague** Gaetan shenanigans from Morphogenesis's

Michael Prime and friends Glasgow 13th Note, 5 March. 8.30pm £3 0141 553 1638

Courtney Pine Three day residence from Hackney's favourite son London Jazz Cafe, 15-17 March 020 7384 0044

Quickaspace Bitter sweet kraut-rock London Drill Hall, 16 March. £7.50 020 8963 0940

Cino Robair + John Butcher Heavyweight Improv duo of American percussionist Robair and British saxophonist Butcher. Liverpool Bluecoat, 2 March 7.45pm £6.50 0151 280 9628

Scanner Robin Rimbaud conjures up a live soundtrack for Godard's *Abraham* in surround-a-vision London PMQ Cinema, 3 March. 10pm £12 020 7960 3100

Compay Segura Buena Vista Social Club maestro neverlands the sun London Royal Festival Hall, 11 March. 8pm £30-£10 020 7960 4242

Luke Slater Brighton's Techno maestro on a free club tour London Fabric (17 March) Birmingham One Club (26)

Spacer vs The Orchestra Beat connoisseur Luke Gordon goes head to head with 28 classically trained musicians London Spital 2B March. 8pm £17.50 020 7902 9012

Philip Thomas Planet plays works from Morton Feldman Michael Finnissy and Cornelius Cardew. Shepherd's Bush Empire (20) The Old (21 March), Manchester Metropolitan University (29) Bradford University (16) London British Music Information Centre (30)

DJ Vadim Cut-up tour a Russian Perussion Tour continues with Kilia Kela, Bubu Rum (1) and P'ing Thing London Scratch (2 March) Liverpool Zanzibar (3), Belfast Brunswick (4) Liverpool (5) 020 7607 1818

Hybridity Daniel Franklin's free club moving up Afghanai to Gnawa trance, newhall, dub and Hip-Hop London Tea Room Des Artistes (23) 8.30pm-11pm. 020 7652 6526

Instant Music Meeting A night of experimental pop and just plain old experimental music from One King Poets Anna Home and Richard Sanderson (3 March), VT Kots, Seven Bistro and Dave Tucker (10), Union Wrecks, Lyndsey Cockwell & Adam Bohman and Paul Head (17)

Club Spaces

All Angels An evening of new and improvised music in leafy Chiswick, featuring Phil Durrant, John Bisset, Tom Chant and Simon Fall and Rhian Davies, Matt Davis, Alessandro Rombola and Mark Woolard. London St Michael and All Angels Church (31 March. 8-10pm £5-£4 020 8994 7993

Beakit & Scaper Vin Miley's latest takes over Brighton watering hole for an evening of breakin' and beats with Unison Youth, Vinn and Sola London Junction (17 March. 9pm-3am £3.00 7647 7615

Click Experimental electronica and electro from DJ's Cee (DiveFocus), CMJ Plus One, Armand, Tom Churchill and multimedia projections London ICA, 10 March. 9pm-1am. £4.50 020 7930 3647

Diffusion Hosted by the Sonic Arts

Network, this free evening of experimental music and video features D.J. Robert, Hampson Tom Wallace and Cove Graham London Below, 24, 28 March. 7pm-midnight. free 020 7928 7337

Firstlight In Manchester The Hacienda Club moves to the big city for a night of deejayery with Andy Smith, Sam Duprez and Ian Taylor. Manchester Generation X, 31 March. 9pm-2am £7.50 0161 236 4899

Funkt Acid beats regn supreme in the company of Paul Harrnell (Orbital) (1), Hammond, Psychohounds, Dee Joy Pint Roc, Duncan Forces and more London Mass, 18 March. 10pm-6am £10-16 020 7738 5255

Future Funk Bristolian Techno and drum'n'bass extravaganza with Oliver DJ Tee Bee, Motoboy, Paul Damage and Get Banz Bristol Plate (20 March. 10pm-4am £5 0771 473 7693

Home Taping The Sneaker Pimps curate this celeb-filled night London ICA, 9 March. 9pm-1am £14.50 020 7910 3647

Hybrid Muzak artists Vaid present breakbeat breakbeats in the company of Fierce No U-Turn, Dope Roasted, Jon Tye, Siren & Blade and Zombie. London Upstarts at the Garage (23 March. 9pm-2am. £5-£4 020 7607 1818

Hybridity Daniel Franklin's free club moving up Afghanai to Gnawa trance, newhall, dub and Hip-Hop London Tea Room Des Artistes (23) 8.30pm-11pm. 020 7652 6526

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PHOTO: VINCE DOHERN



out there

• 151, Free Rate (24) London upstairs at the Cernunnos, Fridays, 8.30-11pm, £4/£3 and London Sat 15 March, 8pm, £6/£4, 020 7392 9032

Kosmische The usual Krautrock-infested tomfoolery with Oh, Sun Play, Aaron, Jim Backhouse and Horton Jupiter London upstairs at the Garage, 25 March, 9pm-3am, £5 020 7267 1818

Little Stabs At Happiness Mark Webber mixes celeb deco jams with cult films. This month's experimental show is by Georges Franju, HY Hirsch and George Kuchar, while Webber, Gregory Kurucz and BR Walters take a stab at the deeks. London KA, 18 March, 8pm-1am, £8/£6, 020 7930 3647

Meeting Place Staxus evening of weirdness with Echovery and Yosserin (5 March), Mai Tundra, Turn Breaker and Skylab's Mixt. Discosse (26), and Slognot fans The Handsome Family (26). Brighton Lift Club, 8-11pm, £3/£3.50, 01273 779411

Movement Long running cutting edge breakbeat stew featuring DJ Hyde, Marky Ban Company, Jukebox Jack Frost, Bryan Gee, Ray Keith and Tonic, plus Frankie Frost and DJ Siving in the Hippo room London Plaza, 24 March, 10pm-6am, £10-£16, 020 7377 9494

NY Stash Raw breakbeat mix with DJ Hyde and The Freestylez, Matt Cantor (10 March), Big Beat Boutiques with Lo Fidelity All Stars, Si Begg and Hofffield General (17), OJ Assault, DJ Nage, Mile and Thermoc (24), and Adam F (7 April). Andrew Weatherall, Gamelion and Utah Jazz (31). Shefford Unit, Fridays, 10pm-3am, £7 50/£6 50, 0114 267 1861. Web: www.nystash.co.uk

Perverted Science Rainer Truby and Michael Reinboth from Munich's Compton label and residents Pete Harben and others. London 333 Club, 17 March, 10pm-5ams, £10-£6, 020 7739 5949

Rehabilitation Lee & Audeh host this free monthly sleep-in, 8.30 night, with we set from Adele Bink and Ollie Spongoboy & Tetch, Jim Backhouse and Mogg Hill London Foundry, 3 March, 8pm-midnight, free

Sleek Sabbath Celebrate the day of rest with Pancreatico, Saerk Soundystem and Deviant's At Work (12 March), and Vladislav Delay To Rococo, Röhr's Stefan Schneider and DJ D (19). Brighton Lift Club, Sundays, 8pm-11pm, £11, 01273 779411

Sleek Sabbath London Brighton's heretical den of perversion moves to the capital with two-step shenanigans from Stanton Warriors, DJ Deekline and Kieran Hebdon (12 March), and Hyperdub cut 'n' paste with Rico, Milk Blood One & Manipulate, Euro Kults and Jackmaw/Mellow D (26). London Notting Hill Arts Club, fortnightly Sundays, 4pm-11pm, £5/£3, 020 7460 4459

Space Love cost House and Techno from Stacey Pullen, Luke Solomon and Kenny Hawkes London Bar 300, Brixton 1 March,

10pm-3am, £5/£3, 020 7287 2715. Web: www.bornandbrought.co.uk

The Sprawl Edge Electronics with the legendary Baby Ford, Phoenix Shirofieb and B-Tonic (19 March) plus a special extra night with Vlaestra Delay, Soul State Sounds DJ D Tennis and B-Tonic (22). London Global Cafe 7.30pm-midnight, £9/£6, 020 7287 2242

Winged Monkey A night of 'difficult' listening and obscure performance featuring your hostesses Marisa Carnesky (aka The Jewels Tassebois), Ruanne Olympos, and various tickly Q's. London Royal Vauxhall Tavern, 10 March, 9pm-2am, £9/£3, 0171 254 7700. Carnesky also appears at Skapegoat, a fucked up night for fucked up people, including no rules DJing from our man with a stiletto camera, Johnny Volcano. London Upstairs at the Garage, 3 March 9pm-2am, £5/£4, 020 8516 8254

Incoming

Cornucopia Juan Cope's mini-Meltdown. Aeterno rare performances from Col Las Terme Machines and the original line-up of The Real Thing with Manuel Gotschling and Klaus Schulze. London Royal Festival Hall, 2 April 020 7860 4242

Loveklyte Three day sound art programme featuring Teme Thuzmer, Ade Ward, Scanner, Ken Cuscine, Terri Oyada, Tom Remmeling and Mikko Plassas. Shoreditch Workshop Gallery, 6-8 April, 014 221 0393

Taktofies Improv pow-wow featuring performances by Derek Bailey, Lee Ranaldo, Paul Lydon and Catherine Jaunaux. Switzerland: Basel Ateliers and Zurich Rose Fabrik, 6-8 April. Web: www.taktofies.com



Brandon LaBelle

Interference Relaunched

The series of themed mixed media events encompassing talks, screenings and live music, set up by The Wine and Lee Centre, will be kicking off again with two events in April: an evening with transduced electroacoustic composer Terrie Thoemitz (6 April, 8pm), and a presentation by DJ battery's Brandon LaBelle with special guests (27). Info: 020 7684 0201

Radio

National

BBC Radio 1 97.9 FM

John Peel *Auerskaya/Runaway* 10pm-midnight The by now venerable mix of rock, indie, Techno, Jungle, Electronica, dub and the legendary sessions

Giles Peterson *Wednesday midnight-2am* Downtempo beats, experimental drum 'n' bass, funk, psychadelic soul, and plenty more in between

Andy Kershaw *Thursday midnight-2am* Raw music and global sounds, including folk, roots, reggae, out rock and more

Fabio & Grooverider *Fridays 2-4pm* Two hours of vanguard drum 'n' bass

Westwood Rap Show *Fridays 7.15pm-10pm* Sundays 9pm-midnight Tim's fast breaking Hip-Hop tips

BBC Radio 3 93.7 FM

Late Junction *Monday-Friday 10.15-11.30pm* Verity Sharp and Fiona Bellington present news and discussion of a diverse musical selection

Mixing It *Saturdays 10.45-11.30pm* Eclectic mix of new music and discourse from Robert Sandil and Mark Ronse. Includes Martin Timpson session (11 March)

Chair On 3 *Saturdays 11.30pm-1am* Modern jazz recorded in session and concert. This month Norma Winstone (4 March) Sco, Ho, Lo, Fo (11) Nguyen Le's Sand Trio (16), Bill Jenkins' Suburba (25)

Regional

BBC Derby 94.2/95.3/104.5 FM, 1116 MW

Soundscapes *Sundays 3-6pm* Ashley Franklin plays instrumental electronica, contemporary classical/avant music, New Age and Ambient

BBC Greater London Radio (C4) 94.9 FM

Destination In *Wednesday 8-10.30pm* Ross Allen spins a motley, morphing selection of new music, from spacey jazz and minimalism to electronica and leftfield pop

Charlie Gillett *Saturdays 7-9pm* Rock, roots, dub, World Music, blues, R&B and more sounds of the city

BBC Lancashire 95.5/101.9/104.5 FM, 155 MW

On The Wire *Saturdays 12-2am* Steve Barker's eclectic mix of dub, experimental electronics, out rock, free jazz, World Music and beyond

BBC Shetland 95.2 FM, 1465 MW

The Late World Noise *Janet Jackson* 2am Roger Hill's mix of avant rock, psychadelia, warped Ambient and global grooves in themed sequences

BBC Scotland 92.4-9.7 FM

From Bop To Hip Hop *Wednesday 8-9pm* Owain Sallins drops jazz and new beats

Beat Patrol *Sunday 8-9pm* Peter Aston plays independent music across the spectrum

Electronica Sundays *9-10pm* Marti Perrotta plays the latest Techno and dance tracks

Cable Radio 95.5 FM (Milton Keynes)

The Garden Of Earthly Delights *Fridays 10pm-midnight* Shane Querten's blend of avant rock, electronic excess, with bizarre soundbytes

Kiss 100 FM (London)

Patrick Forge *Sundays 10pm-midnight* Eclectic jazz-not-jazz mix

Frost And Hype *Sunday/Monday midnight-2am* More breakfast than's chilly the most

Sipnatt & Friends *Monday 2-4pm* Jazz, jungle, cyber-soul, breakbeats and electrofied grooves from this lively bunch

Corin Date *Wednesday 2-4pm* Minimal Techno and concrete House

Buzz 102 FM (Birmingham)

Totally Wired *Day 10am-1pm* Eclectic selection of leftfield independent/dance tunes, laced with 60s/70s lastbacks

The Chill Factor *Sundays 5-7pm* Clive Crankie's continuous mix of drum 'n' bass, Hip-Hop, classical, electronica and more

Links to My radio broadcasts can be found on The Wire Web site: www.thewire.co.uk/the-wire

Our 'There items for inclusion in the April issue should reach us by Friday, 10 March.

NO Listings information must include a contact phone number, start time and ticket price. Listings cannot be taken over the phone.

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The 6 April LEEDS FISH CENTRE 0113 241 9570

Fr 7 April POOLE ARTS CENTRE 01202 602222

*Sat 8 April LONDON BARCLAY CENTRE 0207 968 0661

Sun 9 April LEICESTER DE MONTFORD HALL 0116 233 2011

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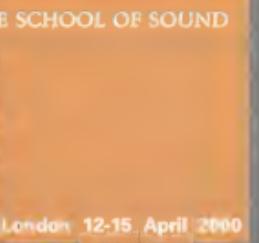
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epiphanies

Terre Thaemlitz's heroes become zeroes after a mid-air collision with American nerds Cheap Trick

Oh didn't I, didn't I, didn't I see you cryin'? Feelin' all alone without a friend, you know you feel like dyin' — Cheap Trick, "I Want You To Want Me"

It was the summer of 1979, somewhere in an East Coast airport, and I was on the final leg of an elementary school tour of Washington DC (not as cool as the barnaul school trip to Disneyworld), but educational enough to convince my parents it was worth going into debt over. Aside from being educational, the trip was also supposed to teach me positive socialisation skills, and both my parents and myself were hoping this time spent with classmates outside of the classroom would put an end to my five year run as King of the Nerds. I was to focus on things like 'trying in', 'going along with the other kids', and 'trying harder' – and if all else fails, 'just ignore them and they'll go away'. Well, the end of my reign seemed plausible at the outset, but kids are clever and it didn't take long for my classmates to figure out that not letting me find a seat on a tour bus was not all that different from keeping me from sitting down on a school bus. Only now when I finally did get to sit down was it next to a dirty toilet. And getting pushed to the back of lines at museums and restaurants is kind of like getting pushed to the back of the school cafeteria line. Needless to say, these were all turns of events for which I was totally unprepared.

Reflecting briefly: Cheap Trick



Once in the air, my little bag of nuts (on-board snack, that is) in hand, I begged the flight attendant to have the group autograph my napkin. "Especially the guy with the musical sweater?" She said she would see what she could do, and headed off toward the front of the plane. I leaned steeply into the aisle to try and catch a glimpse of the proceedings. As she handed them the napkin, they reflexively began penning autographs, when Rick asked, "Who are these for, anyway?" As the attendant pointed my way, I blushed and ducked, only to hear Rick slyly say, "What, that little nerd there?" In that moment of Rick's triumph of wit, the irony of such a statement coming from someone who based his career on a geek persona was apparently lost on both of us. Luckily, I had two classmates swing with him to ensure the details of the event would live on in legend long after the flight had landed. When the flight attendant returned with my autographed napkin, it read through my blur of tears like a notarized certificate of inescapable otherness.

Rick's comments had had two long-term effects on me. The first was turning me off the 'rock 'n' roll' phenomenon and consolidating its association with dominant cultural forces of homogenisation and oppression (or, in the language of the day, 'bulles') I knew rock 'n' roll was something associated with popularity and power, but it was at this moment when I firmly and finally concluded that power was directed against me (remind me to tell you about the previous summer when I was beaten up by a gang of rockers because I owned a copy of Styx's *ieces Of Eight* before they did, somehow defaming the group's image because I was such a nerd). Now that the stuff new wave harlots are made of! The second of Rick's lessons, which has served me well with regard to drag (and gets truer with age), is that no matter how hard I may try to blend in with a particular crowd, I should never count ourselves out.

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